

# Islamic Solution To Human Issues

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## A Note

This book is an English translation of the Well-known and popular book of Maulana Syed Jalaluddin Omari. Its Urdu title is '**Insan aur uske Masail**'. A fair index of the popularity of this Urdu book is the fact that it has been published nine times in India alone. It has been published off and on in Pakistan too. Its Hindi version has been published. The book has been translated into some other languages too.

Mr. U. Muhammad Iqbal translated this book into English. The translation was first published in 1997 by Islamic Research Institute, Jamia Darussalam, Oomerabad, Tamil Nadu and distributed solely through Islamic Foundation Trust, Chennai-12. The translator has revised the translation and added a few footnotes to substantiate the author's observations. Arabic excerpts from the Qur'an, wherever necessary, have been included. Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, New Delhi, are thankful to Islamic Foundation Trust, for granting permission to publish this English translation and it is now being published in a standard and superior format. It is hoped that the translation will secure as much patronage and commendation from the readers as the original work did.

Publishers

## A Second Look

This book was first published in 1960. Its original Urdu version has gone through several editions, both in India and Pakistan. Those who have read this book have a liking for it, as they find it to be a good introductory read on Islam. There was a feeling that the book needed revision and Allah has provided an opportunity for it now. I have endeavored to enhance the value and relevance of the book by revisiting it. However, no major alteration or addition has been made because my aim is to publish a more comprehensive book on the subject. A large part of such a book has already been published in the form of elaborate articles. May Allah enable me to complete this project at the earliest. May He approve of this humble effort of mine and may His devotees derive maximum benefit from it.

*Syed Jalaluddin Omari*

December, 29, 1991



## Introduction

There are two ways to study. Philosophy is one way of study. It throws direct light on the subject of Truth. On themes such as the creation of man, the purpose and scope of creation, the vast universe, the mode of exposition and expatiation adopted by philosophy is purely erudite. This mode is abstruse and it is profitable only to those whose standard of scholarship and research is very high. The people whose level of knowledge is not up to the mark will not be in a position to derive benefit from it. For them, the second way of study will be more appropriate. And this approach evaluates the reality about man in the light of the problems he confronts. The average mind does not apprehend truth directly; it is habituated to comprehend reality in the context of day-to-day problems and conditions. The problems which man encounters as the vicissitudes of life sweep him along constitute his real challenges. Addressing these challenges is more interesting and enlightening than an ideological or philosophical discussion because the discussion of such challenges answers questions which crop up in the mind of man day and night and provides solutions which human nature hankers after.

This book is based on the second way of study. First

the problems are classified in principle and then Islamic precepts are presented under each classification. In my opinion Islam provides the right and effective solutions to problems, both big and small. Enshrined in it are such everlasting truths that it is competent to solve issues which bedevil every epoch and every region. There is no poser life throws up for which Islam has no effective reply. So far, the philosophical systems which man has so meticulously forged in order to unravel the puzzles of existence have either miserably failed to deliver or are on the verge of failure. As long as man continues to seek guidance from them, he cannot forestall his doom.

As far as possible, scholarly discourses and technical parlance have been scrupulously avoided in this book. Simple and easy vocabulary has been used. In the last chapter, an analysis of those causes which form stumbling blocks on the way to Islam is presented. God willing, those devotees of God who seek Islamic solution in this book to their personal problems may not be disappointed. That will be the justification of this publication.

New Delhi  
1960 August 24

*Syed Jalaluddin Omari*

## 1. What are the Problems?

Life has a myriad of problems, pertaining to hunger, clothes, education, residence, society and culture, war and peace, life and property, the protection of honour and integrity etc. Man is overwhelmed by such problems. Problems affecting the individual or the family, the society or the state can be classified under three categories - ideology, social relations and law. There is no problem of life which is not covered by these categories somehow or other.

All problems of man issue forth from one's attitude to oneself and to the vast world spread around him. This determines his place vis-a-vis the world as well as the direction his social activities have to take. Before he initiates his activity, man has to confront two questions. 1. How will he deal with other human beings in tackling life's problems? 2. Which law does he follow? That is, whose authority does he recognise as indisputable and final?

### Attitudes:

Man finds himself in an environment in which the sun rises and sets, the moon waxes and wanes, the day succeeds the night, the stars twinkle in the sky and fade away, the fields bloom and get blighted, the rivers flow and go dry, the spring season passes over the trees and

the farms. These changes do not pass lightly but seek to affect him. As the day breaks, the struggle commences. The night brings rest and relaxation in its wake. Man profits by the fertility of the earth. Famine and blight harm him. Air and water sustain him but when they assume the form of hurricane and flood respectively they extinguish the flame of his life. The earth's bosom provides him with shelter and sometimes refuses to put up with him. The cyclic changes in nature ensure happiness or sorrow, comfort or discomfort, health or ill-health for him. Therefore he is obliged not to watch these changes as a spectator but to delve deep into their causes and objectives.

Sometimes man realises that he exercises no authority over the earth and the sky, the sun and the moon, air and water and that he is a weakling in comparison with elemental forces which can sustain or destroy him and bestow health on him or deprive him of it at their will and pleasure. No sooner does this impression take hold of him than he gets awed by or scared of everything which can help or harm him one way or another. This explains why the primitive man worshipped the earth because it was a treasure trove, the sky because it showered blessings, the mountains because they towered above him and the seas because their tidal waves could kill him. Thus every force, big or small, ruled over him and he agreed to this subjugation.

Sometimes he thinks that the awe-inspiring forces which seem to be in possession of great power are themselves quite helpless and hapless. Why does not the sun give light all the time? Why is the full moon

eclipsed? Why do the stars disappear? Why does not the earth raise crops on its own? Why are the mountains subject to particular laws? Does this not demonstrate that some mysterious forces are at work in this universe on whose orders fires are lit, rain falls, and the earth brings out its yield. These mysterious forces seem to exercise full control over famine and productivity, prosperity and impoverishment, health and disease, poverty and wealth, death and life.

As a result man becomes curious about these forces which, though invisible, demonstrate their control.

The concept of these forces does not finish off his natural curiosity. Man argues within himself: Why should I subscribe to the forces which I do not see? When I do not know who exercises sovereignty over the universe, how can I identify him? So, he jumps to the conclusion that when certain conditions are in conjunction, certain events take place. Fire burns, plants secure growth from the rainfall, poison kills and elixir ensures health. These things do happen but we do not know how. We know only that we are caught in an environment in which forces, both favourable and hostile to us, are at work in full force. The only thing to be considered is how to take advantage of the favourable forces and how to defend ourselves against the hostile ones. To consider what this world is, who created it, who is ruling over it, what the place of our origin is, what our destination is, and who controls us is an exercise in futility.

According to one estimate, half a million years have passed since man appeared on the earth. During

this period, he made innumerable experiments, made progress in culture and civilization, and discovered many new things and new crafts and technologies. As a result, new materials for study and research have emerged. Notwithstanding all this, man still remains at the stage where his pursuit commenced. The mind at first in a state of perplexity raised the questions: Who am I and what is this world? And even today perplexity persists and the questions remain. Until the truth dawns on him, the questions will remain enigmatic.

## Social Relations

By temperament, man does not prefer individualism. To a large extent he is obliged to lead a collective life because he cannot solve his problems having a bearing upon food, clothes, and shelter without the co-operation of other people. That is why, he has often thought over his relationship with his fellow beings: How is one individual related to another? What are the principles on whose basis the individual and the state are to be integrated? What is the appropriate way of establishing relationship between the two sexes? How should a neighbour and an alien, a countryman or a non-countryman be treated? To such questions he has often given different and sometimes contradictory answers. On some issues there has been some consensus which was not the result of external training and instruction but was the result of the pressure and demands of nature. His nature taught him that all relationships can be made pleasant through justice, honesty, righteousness, fulfilment of promises,

forgiveness and forbearance; preservation of the relatives' rights, love and sympathy, probity and chastity. Therefore these virtues should form the basis for social relations. So far experience has shown that human relations improved to the extent these virtues were practised. These natural principles of relationship are known as principles of ethics. Wherever these principles were violated, the relationships were corrupted and spoilt. Atrocity and brutality, falsehood, deception, misappropriation, jilting, usurpation of others' rights, vendetta, vindictiveness have turned man into a predator. His relationships with others are on a level lower than that of animality.

In spite of all this, the question regarding the observance of the ethical principles remains because the interests and advantages of one man differ from those of another. The interest that man evinces in his own self is not extended to another self. The love he shows to the members of his family he does not show to the non-members. The attachment which a man feels for his nation and country he does not feel for another nation. When man scrupulously follows the ethical principles in human relations, sometimes, his interests are affected, he sustains personal loss, family connections are snapped, communal and national advantages are compromised. On certain occasions the losses reach their farthest limit. This is not easy to bear. Then the question arises: Are morals so invaluable that it is necessary to observe them in all circumstances? Should one stick to truth even when the sword of Damocles is hanging over the head? Is it a sin to deceive an enemy? Is forgiveness commendable at all

times or is revenge sometimes preferable? It is here that the controversy regarding what actually morals are begins. What is the objective of ethics? Are moral values absolute? Is any modification in them possible?

Some philosophers clearly state and it is borne out by man's general conduct that it is not necessary to be always steadfast in observing the ethical principles and that in certain circumstances their violation become unavoidable. It is a moral sin for a father to kill his son but if the son happens to be a traitor, then the father's act of killing the son is a proof of his loyalty to his nation. Telling the truth is a moral virtue but to tell the truth to an enemy is an act of stupidity. Humility and self-effacement is a virtue but it ceases to be so if it results in humiliation and in compromising self-dignity.

At the same time, if it is conceded that moral principles can be sacrificed at the altar of personal and national interests, then it is futile to expect that a man can ever be steadfast in the observance of the moral principles. It is to be realised that to each man his interest is dearer and more precious, even if the world regards it as much less important and precious. Thus, it becomes difficult to decide which interest should take precedence over morals, and which interest shouldn't.

Contrary to this viewpoint, a few idealists assert that morality is above every gain or loss. Deviation from truth cannot be justified even if steadfast adherence to truth may lead to the dismemberment of the body and irreparable loss. Justice must be upheld even if it impairs the best interests of one's own children. Deception is forbidden in all circumstances.

even if this spells disaster to one's nation and motherland.

But then, is man always capable of making such Himalayan sacrifices? Will he ever desist from tyranny and violence in spite of his possessing might and power? Can we not expect a poor and hungry man to resort to theft? Will he exercise self-control and remain chaste in the face of overwhelming sexual urge?

In reply, it is maintained that man is by nature a moral being and his conscience has always treated a violation of moral principles as a cognisable offence. If he is guilty of immoral acts, it is due to external temptations. If these are absent, then he will bear the cross to keep aloft the banner of morality. So our efforts must be directed towards the awakening of human conscience and keeping innate nature unsullied. If this is done, man will not be guilty of dishonouring others or killing them or usurping their property. He will not commit sins like fraud, cheating, false allegations, etc.

## Law

There is no gainsaying the fact that man is virtue-friendly by temperament. However, as he enjoys freedom of will and action, the most serious of crimes cannot be beyond him. He can inflict injury on others, he can turn a traitor, he can conspire against the country's interests. In short, he is capable of resorting to every wrong and forbidden action. That is why, the need for law is felt. Relationships can be made pleasant through morality but it cannot prevent them from

coming to harm. This work of prevention from harm is law's concern. Any social organisation can function without law and through moral principles only when man becomes an angel and the possibility of his ever lapsing into an immoral conduct is thoroughly ruled out. But as regards law, how is one to learn to differentiate between impeccable laws and defective laws? Who will determine that a certain act is harmful to the individual and the society and a certain other act is helpful? What limits should be prescribed in order that trade, agriculture, education, culture, politics and speech and writing can be carried without hindrance?

Autocracy comes out with a reply that legislation is the prerogative of that person who towers above the rest in the society. The one who has the reins of power in his hands can alone comprehend what is good or bad for the society. No other person is endowed with that capability to determine the good or bad for a nation nor does he enjoy that right. It is the duty of the ruler to rule and of the ruled to obey. Autocracy depends on this fundamental principle and does not compromise on it.

One objection to autocracy is-what guarantee is there that the law promulgated by the leader will always be in favour of the community? Will he not prefer self-aggrandisement to service of others? Can't we expect him to ride roughshod over the community's sentiments and to abandon justice in preference to tyranny? Particularly so, when he is armed with power and not deterred by accountability. This is not an unfounded fear. The whole history of autocracy bears witness to it. In the intoxication of power, men have demonstrated that they are more barbarous than wolves

and carnivores.

A way has been devised to escape from the grave consequence of autocracy. The power of legislation has been handed over to the whole nation. It becomes the master of its own destiny. What is good or bad for a nation should not be dependent on a single individual's whim or fancy.

Now, the question is-how should the nation utilise its right? It is obvious that neither is it possible for all members, old and young, of a community to get together and legislate for themselves nor do they all possess legislative competence. So, it was suggested that the community should elect representatives who will legislate. Their legislation will be treated as the legislation of the whole community because the representatives enjoy the trust of the people and are their mouthpieces. As long as they enjoy this trust and remain true spokesmen of the people, they will be retained in office. If they ignore people's wishes, lose people's trust, they will forfeit their position. For this purpose, the nation gets periodic chances to express its opinion about the representatives: This is the democratic concept of legislation.

Democracy is not above criticism. Like autocracy, the solution of democracy does not guarantee that the views of the whole nation are reflected. A small group manages to reflect its opinion. Almost a half of the population will consist of a group whose age and competence are inadequate to the task of registering their opinion in any matter. And those who are qualified on the basis of age to elect representatives have a

sizeable section among them indifferent to issues like what law will be made and who will legislate. Even if they have some interest, they keep aloof in practice. In these conditions, several parties and individuals present their manifestoes. That party which manages to secure numerical superiority of the voters gets the right to form a government even though the total votes polled for it may be fewer than the votes polled for the opposition parties put together. Suppose there are fifty thousand voters and they have ten parties to choose from. If one party manages to secure a little more than 5000 votes (and each of the remaining nine parties secures less than 5000 votes) then democracy recognises that party as representative of 50,000 people.

Thus, this democratic process enables only ten per cent of the people to have their say. How can one be sure that these ten per cent of people will represent correctly the views of the remaining ninety per cent of people and be their well-wishers? Moreover, democracy prescribes a duration after which people express their opinion. During that period, the ten per cent of people who manage to send up their representatives change their views. There are many people who at the time of election are not eligible to vote but soon after that become qualified to vote. How can elected representatives represent the views of such people?

No stoutest champion of democracy has answered such criticism. In fact, democracy is a sophisticated form of autocracy. In autocracy, the centre of power is one individual. In democracy, this power is transferred

to a small group which manages to get its members elected. The amount of support that democracy requires from the people for its functioning, is also required by an autocrat for retaining his power. He is obliged to keep a section of the people pleased and contented. Otherwise he and his power will be soon parted.\*

Ideologies, social relations, law have always been the three problem areas engaging the attention of man. He seeks one solution, and when experience exposes its deficiency, he gets disappointed and renews his quest for another solution. When even the second solution does not untie the Gordian knot, he proclaims his defeat and goes in search of the third solution. In this way as soon as he gets out of the whirlpool of perverse ideologies, dubious ethics, and erroneous laws he is pulled into it again.

History indicates that the calamity originating from the sky or the earth has not brought such a scale of loss as the one resulting from the self-forged ideologies. Man was ruined not so much by epidemics and diseases as he was by perverted morals. No flood or cyclone has demonstrated such ruthlessness as was shown by the sword of the laws he made.

In this long tale of oppression, we come across certain interregna during which man tasted calm and peace and was blessed with true ideologies, true

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\* P.Radhakrishnan writes: As Giovanni Sartori would have, modern democracies are based on representation and not on participation; presuppose delegation and not direct exercise of power; are a system of control and limitation of government and not a system of self-government; people who are governed are not the same as who govern; and "electoral participation" does not in any way resemble the participation of the Greek citizen. At times democracy is taken to include all political systems falling short of outright dictatorship. The Hindu, April 15, 2002, p.10

morals, and perfect laws. These interrengas, though brief, are purple patches in history. They are the silver linings in the pitch darkness of history. Islam lent this light to history and the divinely exalted devotees of God have presented it in the past before the world from time to time. In the following pages a glimpse of that splendour is given. How profitable it will be if man, groping in darkness, determines the direction of his journey in this light! Destination would welcome him and history would record a successful adventure. Is man not yet ready for it?

## 2. The Islamic Solution for the Problems of Existence

### Beliefs and Attitudes

The Islamic concepts have their basis in certain facts which cannot be comprehended through senses, but our research and observation bear them out. The difference between the Islamic concepts and the Non-Islamic ones is that the latter fly in the face of quotidian observations or are unwilling to accept the natural and logical derivations from such observations. Whereas, the Islamic concepts are in total harmony with the universe. After accepting them, a Muslim is not obliged to deny obvious truths or to defy his experience and research.

The non-Islamic concepts are of two types:

- (1) Shirk or polytheism and
- (2) Materialism.

#### **Shirk**

Envisages a belief that several beings are involved in the creation of the universe. One created water, another created air, a still another created provisions. Fire, death, life, light and darkness are each created by a different being and these beings exercise control over these things. The creator of water sends rain, the creator of provisions creates cereals. The creator of life gives life. The creator of death brings about

extinction. Similar is the case of beings in charge of light and darkness.

The concept of shirk argues in self-justification that if the universe had been created by one being, then mutually hostile forces would not be at work and there would have been uniformity and cohesion. The simultaneous operation of construction and destruction demonstrates that there is no one being enjoying unchallenged power and that several beings are engaged in doing what they please. This concept of shirk cannot envisage a hand that can produce and eliminate a design at will. Even if it is agreed upon that one God created the universe, shirk believes that sovereignty is shared by more than one god. It believes that several gods exercise power to such an extent that the true Creator of the universe cannot question them.

It is stupidity to think that different forces are at work behind the myriad and different manifestations. The manifestations are many but the truth is one. This universe operates under a single regulation and principle. Nowhere is it flouted. There is no denying the fact that there is rise and there is fall in the universe but both the phenomena come under a rule. The system which permits a bud to blossom permits it also to fade away. This world would have been described as an amphitheatre of mutually hostile forces if the world had not been brought under a rule.

The interpretation of the universe offered by polytheism may be ignored as it runs counter to the reality and what is more, experience falsifies it persistently. The greatest lesson of human history is

that whenever power was equally shared between any two entities, it invariably led to hostility and schism. The universe is a phenomenon of extraordinary balance and absolute concord and this would have become impossible if the universe had been subjected to the rule of myriad deities. As it is not possible for a man to serve two masters, it is equally impossible for power to range hands in the universe. If the management of the earth is the concern of one and the management of the sky is the duty of another, how are the earth and the sky integrated and in their management there is no clash or conflict? If the power controlling the sun's movement has no authority over the moon, then what is keeping the sun and the moon together in one cosmic system? If Neptune rules over the sea and Jove over the land, why doesn't one try to prevail over the other?

The earth's fertility would have been non-existent if for the availability of a friendly eco-system, measured quantum of the sun's heat and rainfall, and the succession of night and day. If the sun, the rain clouds, and the recurrence of the night and the day had not been within the control of one being, then how is it that for the growth of one sapling all these elemental forces contribute their mite together.

Likewise, it is necessary that water, air, food, and other requirements should be available in a proportionate manner for the survival of man and other living creatures. Otherwise, their survival will be in jeopardy. It has been observed that whatever things are required in whatever proportion for a living being to live and survive, they are being supplied to it in the required proportion. There is neither deficiency nor

surfeit in them. It never happens that there is surplus in water supply or that air supply falls short of the requirements, or that minerals like gold, silver, iron and coal are available in plenty and cereals have gone scarce. This is rather a substantiation of the claim that this universe is being managed by a Being of extraordinary power and foresight. Otherwise there would have been imbalance in various elements. Sometimes the air quantum would have increased to the detriment of the earth's suitability for agriculture and sometimes water level would have gone up to the detriment of the earth's suitability for housing.

Now let us consider the polytheistic concept that though the world has one Creator, it is ruled by more than one power. This concept is not in consonance with human nature. Among the few initial matters that man becomes conscious of on entry into the world, is the feeling that a thing which has come into being through his effort alone should naturally be under his possession. No other person gets the intellectual property right over it. This natural feeling comes in the way of accepting the concept that the Transcendent Being who created the astounding panorama of the heavens and the earth is not the sole proprietor and that others too can press their claims of ownership over the creation.

The human conscience and the human feelings make their proclamation loud and clear that He, who is the Creator of the universe, is its legitimate Owner and Ruler too. His writ should run throughout the universe. On what basis can they, who had no role in the creation of the universe, be declared its owners and rulers?

If it is maintained that the Creator of the universe has handed over its administration to others and has absolved Himself, then this matter is by no means comprehensible. Was the management and control of the universe so unbearable to its Creator that he passed on his burden to others and abdicated? If it is true that the Creator is helpless in the matter of administering the universe, then who else in the world is strong enough to lift this great burden?

To justify this irrational concept, the polytheistic mind presents this concept in a different way. In the mind of the Creator of the universe, it seems, there are a few who have so much clout that God cannot act against their wishes. This theory shows God in poor light. It is extremely uncharitable to think that certain creatures triumphantly rule over God, Who created the sun and the moon, the land and the sea. If God is so helpless and powerless as to be subservient to an animate or inanimate being, then it is stupid to think that He can create this vast universe. In short, human nature is unfamiliar with and remote from every polytheistic concept. It is acceptable to that person only whose nature has been obscured in wraps.

### **[aterialism:**

Now, let us consider materialism. It means that the world was not created by a conscious being and that it came into existence through a matter in which motion was latent and, on account of this motion, the matter started assuming on its own the shapes of different celestial bodies. Consequently the sun, the moon, Mars,

the earth, and billions of stars came into being. Gradually every star developed conditions suitable to it. Out of this lifeless matter, several objects, both animate and inanimate, conscious and unconscious, static and mobile, began to emerge. It is something like this. In one place if pebbles and stones are continuously thrown for a long time, then their heap will form a mountain in one place, or a house in another place, canals and rivulets, roads and bridges, hotels and motels will be formed here and there. From the same heap, the species of man and animals would appear and in course of time, a regular and well-organised habitation would be established.

This interpretation of the universe is absolutely against human rationality and experience. Both the long experience of the past and the present observation have convinced man that neither the conquest of a country nor the decoration of a garden nor a manufacturing unit can automatically happen. Even an essay or a letter cannot automatically come into existence. Even a small particle does not stir from its place unless it is set in motion. The greater a task, the more the reflection, the labour, the attention and the planning. A beautiful specimen of architecture and a sophisticated machine can be built only when men in possession of the highest craftsmanship exert their utmost in terms of mental and manual applications.

How can man, contrary to his own experience, even conceive that this vast and limitless universe came into existence without a creator? This universe is too well-integrated to have any cracks. Every object is a great authentic phenomenon and is so integrated with

surroundings that any dislocation can dismantle the tire system. The sun, the moon, the earth; every celestial object moves in its respective sphere, containing a certain equilibrium. A slight disturbance in this equilibrium can spell immediate disaster for the universe. Man is at his wits' end to think whether any kind or deaf force can ever foster such integration andmony in anything.

Can it be that a casual motion of lifeless matter is to fire its heat, to water its coolness, to stone its dness, to wax its flexibility, to amrita its life-giving perty, to poison its deadliness? Is it also the reason why a magnet attracts, and iron absorbs? Is it by chance that iron, gold, silver, salt and other minerals were brought together on one and the same earth? Is it also by chance that the chain of cause and effect, of reason and result is present in different and contradictory igs of the world? The heat of the sun produces our from the sea and the vapours rise and the wind leads them across the atmosphere, the earth's gravity is the vapours towards itself and they change into fall. The earth becomes fertile and productive as ault and this in turn provides life and sustenance to all e who inhabit the earth. Is this cycle a marvel of e chance?

This concept of materialism is at variance with this universe and is confirmed neither by human rationality nor by human experience. But its acceptance was facilitated by human need for a materialistic and able interpretation of the universe. Man has assumed that the manifestation of the universe abained within itself the truth about the universe and

that nothing existed outside its pale. This was just presumption. A categorical proof for it has not been advanced so far. This is an unjustified audacity to deny the existence of a thing beyond the limit of man's observation, and to describe ignorance as knowledge. Man in his audacity insisted that the universe should be interpreted with a mathematical precision and it should be possible for his senses to confirm such interpretation even though he was not equipped with that range of knowledge and observation required for the purpose. His knowledge of the earth on which he lives and moves and has his being is in itself very limited and a large part of the universe is just a closed chapter for him. The latest revelations about the universe oblige him to acknowledge that he is quite at a loss in regard to this unfathomable universe.\*

Equipped with limited information, man proposes to probe the beginning and the end of this vast universe but he can only resort to conjecture. He does not have any absolute and reliable means of ascertaining the truth.

### **Insight into the Truth**

Islam grants us insight into the truth. It presents a view of the universe which answers all questions raised by polytheism and materialism. This view enables us to know for certain how this universe originated, was organised and proportioned, and is kept running.

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\* It is reported by Dr Lyndon Evans that 0.4% of the universe comprises the stars and 3.6% consists of the galactic dust. It is humbling to note that the scientists have some understanding of the 4% of the universe. The remaining part of the universe or the dark matter is a closed chapter. (Translator)

Islam tells us that this universe did not emerge of its own accord but was brought into existence by a Creator. This Creator is one and unique. There is no partner or peer for Him, or no consultant or joint manager. His authority is the highest, extensive and uncircumscribed. His writ runs through the length and breadth of the universe. Neither a leaf can fall nor an ant can crawl sans His nod. All depend on Him and He ministers to the needs of all. To Him belong knowledge and wisdom. The universe mirrors His wisdom and sagacity. None can pick holes in the execution of His works. He is the fountain-head of all that is good and is absolutely free from errors and defects.

Every dimension of the universe bears testimony to the veracity of the view. Here all objects, from an atom to the sun, stand in need of the Sovereign. Every object owes its existence and function to Him. The motion of the earth and the sky, the panoramic glide for the stars, the role of water and air speak volumes of the presence and the power of the Creator of the universe.

No other view, in comparison, can be totally applicable to and fully interpretative of the universe.

This view is most acceptable to man because it is in accordance with his rationality and experience. Man can neither conceive nor experience an object unrelated to its Creator. If man is not tutored by a materialistic or polytheistic interpretation of the universe, his spontaneous observation will be that the universe was created by an Omnipotent Being and is maintained by Him. The impression that springs in man from a survey of the universe is corroborated by Islam.

Islamic concept of the universe is in consonance with man's nature, feelings and impressions. No other concept can ever gratify his emotions.

Notwithstanding a large array of interior decoration in the universe, man realizes his absolute helplessness and powerlessness. On the one hand there are natural urges, yearnings and ambitions and on the other there are obstacles in their fulfilment. At every step these obstacles frustrate his emotion and hurt his feelings. Occasionally man does not endure these shocks and so he begins to feel frustrated. Man may wish to provide for himself food or clothes, or to satisfy a material need or secure emotional tranquillity. But the requirements for these are not always forthcoming. The wind bloweth where it listeth and not where man wants. The rainfall is not at his beck and call. The earthly and celestial resources are not in his possession. Health and well-being are not under his control. Therefore he directly needs a perennially reliable support. If he is caught in the eye of a storm and he invokes His help, He should rescue him from the whirlwind. If he loses his way in a forest and calls upon Him for help, He should escort him to his destination. If his innocent and little child is so seriously ill that medical experts declare their helplessness and at that time when he stretches his hands seeking His support, his hands should be filled with what he desires for his child. In brief, man needs that support which rescues him from every difficult situation and which fulfills every need of his.

Man is in search such of a Being and he feels it in his bones that He should necessarily be available in this

universe. Whatever man requires for his existence and survival should be available in this universe and so it is unimaginable that there should be no way of satisfying that urge which surfaces every now and then within man. Will not the universe, which caters for a broad spectrum of needs including air and water, minister to that particular need which, if not ministered to, will render all other things inconsequential?

Islam answers this question in the affirmative. It asserts that this quest of human nature is not in vain, and that there is a Sovereign Being in this universe under whom man can seek shelter and that Sovereign Being is God. This is confirmed by tens of thousands of righteous and exalted persons who have appeared in different epochs. They have declared their faith in a Being Who hears their prayers, Who gives what they ask of Him, Whose nearness they feel when they bow their heads in humility and Whose charismatic power is full view on all sides.

It cannot be said that all these noble people lied because there is not a single token of falsehood and deceit in their lives. It cannot be said that all these noble people were either deceived or had come under a spell because they were the intellectual giants of their respective epochs. Every gesture of theirs belies the claim that they were victims of fraud or magic.

## The Ordeal of Man

When there is a Being with authority over each and every thing in this universe, then man must be His object and subordinate. It is imperative that man too

must be in the web of that power to whose authority the sky and the earth, the sun and the moon are subject. But man is autonomous. He is free to accept or reject his own Creator. He is capable of owing allegiance to Him or of defying Him. Why? Islam replies that here the real status of man is on trial, whether man conforms to or deviates from his genuine status and whether he agrees to slave for his Master and Creator or turn rebel. For this purpose of ordeal it was necessary that man should not be installed as a stone in one place but turned into a mobile machine and that man should be given freedom equally for both the desirable and the undesirable conduct because freedom is the prerequisite for the ordeal. Other things in the universe are obedient to the Creator and cannot join issue with Him and so the question of trial does not arise for them.

To realize this purpose the whole world has been set up as a place of trial vis-a-vis man. It is constituted that man can utilize it in accordance with his pleasure. He can energize himself with the earth cereals in order to serve his Master or to impugn His authority. The devotees of God as well as the vicious people can derive benefit from the sun's heat. The resources and the assets which are found galore throughout the world can be exploited in equal measure by both the virtuous and the wicked people for their own success. It is not the case that these resources are meant for the realization of the right end only and not for that of the wrong end.

The head of a state may dismiss immediately a minister severely those assistants who flout his wish and orders. The true Owner of this universe does not

immediately reprimand the errant human being nor does He at once confer honours upon the person who displays righteous conduct.

## Reward and Punishment

But this does not mean that man does not have to bear the fruit of his action, or that the loyalists of the Divine and the disloyal persons, the true subjects and the rebels will be kept on a par and that they will not confront the consequences of their conduct. Such parity militates against the nature of the universe; this comes into clash with the concept of the Creator of the universe; this runs counter to the purpose for which man was brought into being.

When each and every atom has a certain property in this universe, are man's actions alone an exception to this rule? When fire is endowed with heat, and water is in possession of coldness, are actions with far-reaching consequences devoid of special features? Seeds thrown in the field do not go to waste. Then how can the actions performed day in, day out remain ineffectual? A pedestrian feels pain when his foot brushes against a stone. If he wields a sword and ruins a family, will this atrocity be devoid of any impact? If the raindrops quicken a land and cover it with lush greenery, then will those actions of man be in vain which ensure that law and order will be universal and that peace and rest will be widespread? This can never be. The effect is written on every action but the time for its manifestation is not now. A whole tree lies concealed in a very small seed and the seed has to be sown for it to unravel its

latent potentialities. Likewise the good and the evil consequences of human actions will come to full view when the examination comes to an end. That Day, the Creator of the universe will establish His court and reward those who fulfilled the purpose for which freedom of action was guaranteed to mankind and will take those who ignored that purpose to task.

If that day does not dawn when the human activities are vetted, then it has to be conceded that the Creator of mankind is unconcerned with virtue and vice, that in His eyes the good and the bad are equal and that He validates both truth and falsehood. When our ethical sense does not allow us to blur that distinction between black and white and between the genuine and the spurious, how can the Creator ignore the difference between justice and injustice, between good and evil and between rectitude and turpitude? Moreover, it is an absolute contravention of His infinite wisdom that He should grant freedom to man and not subject him to accountability. Therefore, rationality asserts that He who gives man freedom of action cannot remain oblivious of his actions.

## **Prophethood**

It is necessary for reward and punishment, and for accountability that truth and falsehood, and right and wrong should become crystal clear to man in order that he could adopt truth without let or hindrance and he should not commit an error out of sheer ignorance. There can be no test or ordeal until it is made known which way leads to victory and which way to failure.

One cannot instruct a person in pitch darkness to proceed towards the east and not towards the west. Similarly a blind man cannot be directed thus.

The prophets have been appearing in the midst of people to meet a long-felt need. They represent God. They spell out which deed is approved of by God and which is not, which way is true and which false, and what is truth and what is non-truth. He who listens to them and follows in their footsteps will secure God's approval and will deserve recognition and reward and he who abandons the way shown by them will earn God's wrath and will deserve a most excruciating punishment. It is up to man to recognize a prophet and to get attached to him. God does not descend to the earth to proclaim so-and-so is His emissary. The prophets, however, offer evidence of their prophethood before mankind. After studying the universe, we are obliged to believe in its Creator. In a similar manner the characteristics of a prophet enable us to acknowledge perforce that he is in fact a messenger of God.

The most clinching evidence of a prophet is the categorical way he defines the universe, its origin, its functioning, its purpose, and the way he defines man, his status, his mission and his ultimate end. This is precisely because God sends His prophets to make seminal contributions to these vital issues. At the same time it goes without saying that the prophetic precepts should measure up to knowledge and rationality and the prophetic claim should not fly in the face of a well-established fact, and of observation and experience. A messenger of God is not expected to be unaware of any fact about the universe. As a matter of

course, he is given access to those things which remain out of bounds for a commoner.

The second proof lies in the fact that a prophet is not a mischief-or a sedition-monger. He invites people towards goodness and welfare by precept and practice. An advocate of mischief and sedition can be a rebel of God and not His mouthpiece. The Maker of the earth does not want sedition to thrive on the earth. He wants all good things to prosper on the earth.

The third proof is that the prophet is exclusively committed to the conveying of the Creator's message to mankind and is not motivated by any mean and vulgar urge. The people with whom he moves day in, day out and the people in whose midst he passes through different stages of life should not allege that he is deceitful, fraudulent, and untruthful and that he hopes to feather his own nest in the name of prophethood. No moral depravity should be attributed to him. Prophethood is a magnificent responsibility, so magnificent that every other thing pales into insignificance before it in this world. It is imperative that one who merits this magnificent responsibility should be endowed with transcendental and sublime attributes.

The fourth proof is that every individual possesses within him an urge and ability to know his Creator. He has intuitive and general awareness of the features which betoken a close proximity to the Most High and of the attributes which a human being close to God should possess. There has been a consensus among the people for centuries as regards the charismatic

qualities that an exalted being close to God ought to own. It therefore follows that every person can tentatively gauge whether any claimant to prophethood is in reality a messenger of God or not, and whether the said claimant has those characteristics which the genuine men of God invariably possess.

The genuine prophets, who appeared in this world, fulfilled the criteria without exception. All of them acknowledged unanimously the presence of that Being who is the fountainhead of might and majesty, and who is the Creator, the Owner, and the Administrator of the universe. The unanimity which all the prophets show in regard to the interpretation of the universe clearly indicates that they receive these details from the Creator of the universe. A considerable section of humanity has not reached a consensus with regard to the identity of an invisible reality till today, except the prophets. None can maintain that the teachings on the subject of ethics and virtue which the prophets expounded are a source of sedition and corruption because, whenever those teachings were put into practice, the effects were salutary and mankind had a taste of relief, serenity, and peace. Those teachings were most meticulously lived up to by the messengers of God themselves, and not merely expounded. They manifestly embodied those teachings. Even their detractors bore witness to their exemplary conduct and character. No one levelled a charge of an immoral act against them. One can conclude that they were immensely sincere in their mission and they most fervently believed that every body's welfare, including their own, lay in that mission.

## The Last Prophet

Blessed with these characteristics and virtues, Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) made an announcement of his being a prophet in the sixth century after Christ, and claimed that this universe has a Creator and Owner, that the succession of day and night lies in His hands, that He owns life and death, and that He grants health and decrees ill-health. The long and the short of it is that His writ runs through the universe and no possibility exists for anyone to question His authority. He drew attention to each and every aspect of the universe in support of his claim and called upon mankind to worship and serve the Lord God and to make demands upon Him alone because He is worthy of worship and He is the Granter of boons.

A small specimen of His teachings is given below:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِعِبَادَتِنَا ۝ لَئِنْ أَنْذَنَا  
أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُوا لَا شَغْلَةَ مِنْ لَدُنْنَا ۚ إِنْ كُنَّا لِعُولَيْنَ ۝ بِنِ  
تَقْرِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَنْمَعُ فَإِذَا هُوَ رَاهِقٌ ۖ وَلَكُمْ  
الْوَيْلُ مِنَ الظَّفَرُونَ ۝ وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَمَنْ  
عِنْدَهُ لَا يَسْكُنُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ ۖ وَلَا يَسْتَهِنُونَ ۝ يُسَيِّحُونَ  
الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَقْتَرُونَ ۝ أَوْ اتَّخَذُوا إِلَهًا قِنْ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ  
يُنَشِّرُونَ ۝ لَئِنْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا إِلَهٌ أَلَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لِقَدِيرٌ ۝ قُسْبَلْجَنَ اللَّهُ  
رَأَيَ الْعَرْشَ عَمَّا يَعْصِيُونَ ۝ لَا يُبَيِّنُ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُ ۖ وَهُمْ  
يُعْلَمُونَ ۝ أَوْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُوَنِهِ إِلَهٌ ۖ قُلْ فَأَتُوا بِرُبَّهَاكُمْ  
هُذَا ذُرْتُ مَنْ مَعَنِي وَذُرْتُ مَنْ قَبْلِي ۖ بِلْ أَكُوْرَفُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ  
الْحَقُّ قَبْلُهُمْ مُغَرْصُونَ ۝ وَمَا آتَنَا سَلَّيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ أَلَا

نُوحَى إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٦﴾ وَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذْ  
الرَّحْمَنَ وَلَنَا سَبْعَةٌ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكَرَّمُونَ ﴿٧﴾ لَا يَسْقِفُونَهُ  
بِالنَّقْوَلِ وَ هُمْ بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَبْطَئُ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَ مَا  
خَلَفُهُمْ وَ لَا يَسْقِفُونَ إِلَّا لِيَنْ اتَّرَاقُوا وَ هُمْ قَمْ حَشْيَتِهِ  
مُشَفِّقُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَ مَنْ يَقْلُ وَمِنْهُمْ إِلَّا اللَّهُ قَمْ دُونَهُ فَذَلِكَ نَجْزِيُوكُمْ  
جَهَنَّمَ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾  
(الأنبياء: ٢٩-٣٠)

"Not for (Idle) sport did We create the heavens and the earth and all that is between!"

*If it had been our wish to take (just) a pastime, we should surely have taken it from the things nearest to us, if we would do (such a thing)!*

*Nay, we hurl the truth against falsehood, and it knocks out its brain, and behold, falsehood doth perish! Ah! Woe be to you for the (false) things ascribed (to Us). To Him belong all (creatures) in the heavens and on earth even those who are in His (very) presence are not too proud to serve Him. Nor are they (ever) weary (of His service).*

*They celebrate His praises night and day, nor do they ever flag or intermit. Or have they taken (for worship) gods from the earth who can raise (the dead)?*

*If there were in the heavens and the earth other gods besides Allah, there would have been confusion in both! But glory to Allah, the Lord of the Throne! (High is He) above what they attribute to Him!*

*He cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs).*

*Or have they taken for worship (other) gods*

*besides Him? Say, "Bring your convincing proof: this is the message of those with me and the message of those before me." But most of them know not the Truth, and so turn away.*

*Not a messenger did We send before thee without this inspiration sent by Us to him; that there is no god but I; therefore worship and serve Me.*

*And they say! "(Allah) Most gracious has begotten offspring." Glory to Him! They are (but) servants raised to honour.*

*They speak not before He speaks, and they act (in all things) by His command.*

*He knows what is before them, and what is behind them, and they offer no intercession except for those who are acceptable, and they stand in awe and reverence of His (glory).*

*If any of them should say, "I am god besides Him", such a one We should reward with Hell; thus do We reward those who do wrong.*

*(The Qur'an, 21:16-29)*

On the basis of the instruction he gave regarding the worship of the Creator and Owner, he prepared a complete blueprint of human existence, discussed the ways of worship and the principles of human relationships, formulated civil and penal laws, and expounded social etiquette, communication model, table manners, and the proper ways to sleep and keep awake. He subordinated the whole life to the worship of God and so firmly established the relationship between God and man as to preserve it from every direction and under all circumstances.

What he taught was what the preceding prophets had

taught. This clearly indicates the common source of knowledge which he and they shared between themselves. Otherwise it was impossible for a person, uninitiated in the philosophical systems of the world or in the skills of reading and writing, and who did not enjoy the company of scholars and experts and who had not even met an intellectual, to say exactly what other men had said centuries earlier.

Without any background of knowledge and study, he suddenly launched a mission centred on the worship of one God and he did so with such strength of conviction that every move of his life mirrored that conviction. His enemies resorted to most severe persecution. They tortured him, forced him to a state of starvation, abused him, pelted him with stones and left him with no alternative but to migrate from his birthplace. However, his conviction did not suffer in the least. Instead, it was rather strengthened. He referred every matter to the same God towards whom he was inviting people. He stretched his hand before Him like the fakirs and the have-nots. Melting into tears, he presented his petitions before Him. Many a time he was seen in a state of supplication on lonely nights seeking refuge in God from punishment and begging for His mercy. Everyone who observed him closely gave evidence that he had strong faith in that Being who created the universe, owns it and rules over it and that he was aware of his absolute helplessness and utter humbleness in comparison with that Being.

One cannot retort that he had an axe to grind and so made an elaborate show of putting up with persecution, because, when he assumed the reins of government over

the whole Arabian peninsula, he preferred to live like an indigent. He preferred starvation to luxury. He did not like to rest on cozy cushions in preference to a coarse mat. When his companions expressed their desire to prepare a soft bed for him, he exclaimed, "*This world and me! How do I regard this world? I am a traveller in this world. A weary traveller takes respite in a shade but does not regard the shade as his destination. Similarly, this world is not my destination.*"

One cannot allege that he was only a pretender to prophethood because his enemies bore witness that he was truthful and righteous. Here is a person about whom there is no instance of lying in any transaction of life. Will it not be an enormity if the charge of lying is levelled against him in a particular matter without any substantiation? If his arguments are not found satisfactory, the utmost one can utter is that his statement is beyond comprehension.

Moreover, it is a fact that a liar cannot stick to his misstatement for long. For a period of twenty - three years the Prophet stuck to his assertion repeatedly and he never went back on it any time. It is an impossibility too for a liar to gather around him the loyalists of the first water. The Prophet had such loyalists around him. They asked him about the wish of the Being whom they did not see. And when he spelt it out, then they made no bones about sacrificing either their wealth or their lives. They were ever ready to act in accordance with his will as reflected in his looks. They had implicit faith in his utterances. Has any liar been able to inspire such faith and loyalty in his followers?

He organized a group of such loyal followers and handed over to them the Book revealed by God and announced that the line of prophethood has ended. The last brick in the edifice of prophethood has been placed in the spot kept vacant for it. Now, the Book revealed to him will be the basis for human conduct until the Doomsday.

After subscribing to the claim that he is God's messenger, there is no rhyme or reason in not accepting his claim that he is the final prophet too, particularly when the divine Book he presented to the world declares unambiguously that the purpose for which the prophets made their appearances has now been fulfilled. The need for the advent of any other prophet will not arise hereafter because the Holy Book contains doctrines which will stand the test of time.

### 3. Human Relationships

#### Difference and Controversy

If the people of the past, the present and the future are brought in one place and questioned about their feelings, emotions and needs, there will be unanimity in their replies. Not one of them will be devoid of happiness and sorrow and physical urges. His emotions will not be different from those of others and his physical urges too will not be dissimilar.\* Not understanding this (glaring fact), humanity is divided into mutually clashing sects and groups as though each individual and each group has a different nature and different needs, as though an Asian differs from a European or an American with regard to the necessities of life, or a Roman's feelings and emotions are at variance with those of a Greek.

When it is a fact that in terms of emotions, interests and needs, humanity constitutes a unit, then which factor leads it towards friction. The reason may be that man is in search of a purpose in the external world. This purpose will function as a pivot upon which his whole life could revolve or as an altar at which he could lay down his life, his property, and his time. Without such a goal, he cannot rest. No agreement exists among the people in regard to the realization of such a goal.

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\* The realities of spirit are the same now as they were thousands of years ago and differences of race and nationality do not affect them. S. Radhakrishnan, Introductory Essay, Bhagavad Gita, p.37.

## The wrong objectives of life

For one, service rendered to the family and the tribe is the ideal of human life. The hallowed duty of man is to defend, support, and struggle to promote the cause of the tribe because the tribe is man's nursery, and source of his existence, and of his activities. All his capabilities are a result of the munificence of the tribe and the best way to recompense it is to serve the tribe. He who utilizes his talents in the service of the tribe has tasted success.

It is brought home to a person holding this view that the tribe in which a person is born is not the only source strengthening his latent potentialities. Other families and tribes can also claim credit for the role in his progress. The area of his services and sacrifices should be enlarged to encompass all other tribes speaking the same language because language unites those tribes, establishes a harmony of thoughts, and closes their ranks.

Language extends to a few hundred or a few thousand kilometres but the interest and needs of man are more extensive than the isoglossal area. Man is under an obligation to keep in touch with those individuals and tribes who speak a different language. Therefore it is surmised that the economic, social, and other interests of man extend to a large tract of the earth which is made homogeneous by factors like the mountains, the rivers, the means of production, weather, etc. Man exploits the whole tract and derives benefit from each and every thing in it. Therefore the highest objective of man is to be of service to that tract

of land irrespective of the diversity of languages, tribes and races thriving on it.

The present era subscribes to this line of thinking and looks upon the dedication of life and death to a tract of land as the pinnacle of glory. A martyr to this cause is honoured and commemorated in several ways-a mausoleum is constructed, wreaths are laid near his icon, and books of history immortalize his name.

All the goals of life adumbrated above do not bring men closer but tear them apart because each one of the goals is severely limited and addresses the interests of particular classes and groups. Not one of them is concerned about the interest of the whole humanity. It is a fact that a limited goal cannot be realized without harming a higher goal. So it is impossible for those individuals and nationalities to come together to espouse the cause of a limited goal when it harms their own interests. If the purpose of human life is confined to an area of certain rivers and mountains, then it will not be of interest to those who live beyond those confines and do not derive benefit from those rivers and mountains. If a person has no interest beyond that of his linguistic group, then why should other linguistic groups move closer to him and endear themselves to him? If a person's love centres on his own nation and tribe, then why should other nations ignored by him display their attachment to him?

This is the reason why each individual, institution, and nation has a distinct icon of love and devotion, and to propitiate one's icon, the icons of others are being condemned, taunted, and subjected to other

iconoclastic practices. An Asian is full of hate and hostility towards the nations and languages of Europe and a European has nothing but contempt for anything Asian. America and Africa have no love lost between themselves.

The concept of the world brotherhood of man is offered as a solution to this state of affairs. In other words, all nations should be united in common interests and should struggle unitedly in securing them, and should live by the motto: Live and let live. But then, this is easier said than done. Attitudes determine human interests. Whether it is compromise or war, whether it is friendship or enmity, all issues are settled on the basis of attitudes. If the attitudes have inherent contradiction, interests can never be common. A man committed to the ideology of Communism will find it impossible to make a common cause with the ideology of Capitalism. A nationalist cannot see with equanimity the progress of a hostile nation. The history of mutually conflicting ideas describes how men had to put up with a perennial state of cold war or armed conflict. How can such ideas form a basis for affection and love today? Why should a man love either the land which is not profitable to him or the nation professing alien beliefs and ideas or the language radically different from his mother tongue? This pertinent question can not be rejected off-hand and has remained unanswered by the upholders of the concept of the world brotherhood of man.

## The Right Perspective

Islam declares that all men constitute one fraternity and fixes one purpose of existence for all because the Creator and Owner of all is one. It does not specify different purposes for the Indians, the Chinese, the Russians, and the Americans. It specifies that the Creator of mankind demands that every individual and every group inhabiting the earth should glorify and worship Him. On this point, no Non-Arab can say that this demand is applicable to the Arabs only and no Arab can say that this demand is meant for the Non-Arabs only. This demand of God holds a fascination for the people of different races and regions. It is in the nature of man to move closer to his Creator, Owner, and Benefactor. He feels impelled to turn towards Him and seek shelter in Him at every step. He seeks His succour in dire straits and acknowledges gratefully in happy moments how he has been a recipient of many acts of His benefaction. So the purpose enunciated by Islam is a purpose for all. Each person personally gains by accepting it and sustains personal loss by rejecting it.

Moreover the Most High has no caste-based affinity with anyone. He does not have any family or tribe. His existence is not confined to any particular region of the earth. He is Omnipresent. He sees everyone. Every individual is free to get in touch with Him, be he a white or a black, a labourer or an employer, a peasant or a trader, a learner or a teacher, a ruler or a subject. He is equidistant from all of them. All can proceed towards Him and hope for His proximity and affection. None can look for eminence in His presence on the basis of either genealogy or status.

Access to Him can neither be hindered by economic disadvantage nor be assisted by affluence. He is ever willing to move forward to receive anyone advancing towards Him, whether he is from Africa or America, and speaks English or Arabic. Honour and distinction is reserved for him who enslaves himself to God, and fears His wrath, and longs for His mercy.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ ذَرَّةٍ فَإِذَا هُنْ يَعْصِيُونَ  
قَبْرًا كَبِيرًا لِتَعْلَمُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ  
(أَجْرَاتٌ: ١٣) حَسْبٌ

*O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes, that you may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).*

*(Qur'an, 49:13)*

Persons devoid of the fear of the Lord and unwilling to put on His yoke cannot be protected from His punishment either by their pomp and splendour or by their power and authority. Many nations and individuals have lived on this earth. Intoxicated with their power, they refused to obey the Lord and preferred to rebel against Him but they departed, unwept, unsung and unhonoured. If the prophets are particularly close to God, it is precisely because of their loyalty or obedience to Him. If they deviate from the path of obedience to Him, they will find no refuge from His punishment. Prophet Muhammad (May Allah

bless and greet him) was the most exalted slave of Allah. Still he was asked to proclaim: Say:

إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾ (انعام: ١٥)

*I would, if I disobeyed my Lord, indeed have fear of the penalty of a Mighty Day.* (Qur'an, 6:15)

This is but another way of saying that, among the human inhabitants of the earth, awards and rewards will be merited by those whose hearts are characterised by piety. Nothing else besides the fear of the Lord can access God to man and avert His punishment. The differences in terms of ethnicity, language, industry and nationality do not provide any basis for a hierarchical division. They are but a part of divine semiotics, whose main thrust is to clarify that the genuine supremacy and sovereignty are exclusively meant for the personality of God. He determines who should be beautiful, and who ugly, who should be rich and who poor, who should be born where, and who should speak which language. If anyone concludes that anyone of these characteristics demonstrates someone's superiority, or inferiority he is not drawing the right moral from one of the magnificent tokens of God. He is devoid of that perception which is capable of scrutinising the proofs offered by God.

وَ مِنْ أَيْتَهُ أَنْ خَلَقْتُمْ قَنْ تُرَابٌ فَمَّا إِذَا أَتَتُمْ بَسْرَ  
شَنِيدِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ وَ مِنْ أَيْتَهُ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ قَنْ أَنْقَسْلُمْ أَرْدَاجَا  
لَتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَ جَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَ رَاحِمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِيْتَ  
لِقَوْمٍ يَنْفَرُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَ مِنْ أَيْتَهُ حَلْقَ السَّلَوَاتِ وَ الْأَسْرَفِ  
وَ اخْتِلَافُ أَنْسِيَكُمْ وَ أَنْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِيْتَ لِتَعْلِيْسِنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَ

وَمِنْ أَيْمَنِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِالَّذِينَ وَالنَّهَارِ وَإِبْرَاقُكُمْ فِي قَصْلِيهِ إِنَّ فِي  
 ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٠-٢٣﴾

"Among His signs is this, that He created you from dust; and then behold, ye are men scattered (far and wide):

*And among His signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect.*

*And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are signs for those who know.*

*And among His Signs is the sleep that ye take by night and by day, and the quest that ye (make for livelihood) out of His Bounty: verily in that are Signs for those who hearken." (Qur'an, 30:20-23)*

This concept eradicates every kind of prejudice from among the people and transforms them into an integrated whole. On subscribing to it the false distinctions regarding honour and dishonour cannot affect man. Worship of the Deity places the master and the slave, the ruler and the ruled, the king and the subject in one row.

It is history's tragedy that selfishness and profiteering were promoted in the name of human prosperity and welfare. Men were divided into groups, and sects, and reasons for internecine conflict were created. With the exception of Islam, all other ideologies have made each man not a sympathiser and

well-wisher but a foe and rival of another and induced their confrontation, resulting in the ruination of families and tribes, in class war, in international conflicts, in murders, anarchy, theft, rapes. No soone did a tale of oppression come to an end than a tale of greater oppression began. That so-and-so belonged to a different group or that such and such group spoke a different language or belonged to a different region was considered an adequate cause for unleashing atrocities. Germans justified invasions on the ground that they were directed against Non-Germans. No ideology that could put an end to injustice or on whose basis justice could be rendered to all sections of humanity or that could ensure human solidarity has been presented so far. From this point of view when we look up to Islam there arises no need to turn in another direction.\*

### **Eradication of Oppression and Injustice**

There is no gainsaying the fact that exploitation, misappropriation, hatred and hostility, oppression and injustice can be eradicated through faith in the divinity of the Deity and through a sense of devotion to Him. The same faith and devotion can stir feelings of goodwill for others, of sympathy and of affection. Worship of God makes two demands upon man.

1. He should keep his feelings and emotions at God's altar. He should glorify God. He should remember God day in, day out. He should stand like a slave in His presence. He should bow his head and prostrate at His threshold in utter humility and

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\* For further elucidation, a booklet published with the title, Islam and the Unity of Mankind, by the author may be consulted.

self-effacement. This is known technically as Ibadah.

2. He should dedicate all his strengths, abilities and favourite things. In practical terms, this dedication should be in the form of service. Helping God's slaves is helping God. To be of service to them is to be of service to God. If someone stretches his hands before you seeking alms and you turn him away empty-handed, it is as if you have turned God back empty-handed. If a patient seeks your help and you deny it to him, it is as if you have denied help to God. In order to please God, it is imperative that you should please His creatures. When the people on the earth are satisfied, the One in the sky will be satisfied too. This fact is brought home to us by the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) quite effectively and fascinatingly in the form of a dialogue. On the Day of judgement, Allah will address man: O Son of Adam! I was ill and you did not ask after my health. And man will say: My Lord! you are the Lord of the universe. How could I have visited your sick bed?

God will reply: Were you not aware that a certain devotee of mine was ill? Still, you did not make a courtesy call on him. If you had gone to him, you would have found Me there.

God will say: O son of Adam! I asked for food from you but you did not give it to me.

Man will say: My Master, you are the Lord of all the worlds. How could I have fed you?

God will reply: Do you not remember that a particular devotee asked you to give him food but you did not feed him. Were you not aware that if you had

fed him then, you would have got its reward here and now?

God will say: O son of Adam! I wanted you to give me a glass of water but you did not give it to me.

Man will say: My Lord! You are the Lord of the Universe. How could I have supplied water to you?

God will reply: So-and-so demanded water but you refused to give it to him. If you had satisfied his thirst then you would have found its reward here.\*

### **The Precept of Affection**

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) disseminated the message of Islam in Mecca for thirteen years. During this period, the core of his message was worship of God and sympathy for fellowbeings. These are the fundamentals of faith and other details are their offshoot. He used to convey the good news of victory in the Hereafter to those who accepted his message and to forewarn the rejecters of the impending doom. To strengthen these two fundamentals, stress was laid on prayer and Zakath reiteratively and persistently. Through prayer, the devotee demonstrates his devotion to God; through Zakath, he proclaims that he is a well-wisher and sympathiser of other human beings and is ready to spend his earnings on them. Until these fundamental are reinforced, faith cannot be established. The spirit of devotion cannot permeate men's emotional world until prayer is deeply integrated with life. Similarly, it is impossible for higher ethics to emerge if bosom

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\* Compare with St. Matthew, 25:35-46. (Translator)

remain devoid of affection. The only way of integrating humanity is on the basis of love and affection. Without this, the emotions of mercy and sympathy cannot be fostered, sacrifice for one another cannot be resorted to, and the attribute of forbearance and forgiveness can never be born. Norms for social life were enunciated only after training people to become devotees of God and well - wishers of people. When they reached the desired standard, then the details of faith were expounded and it became easy for them to put the details of faith to practice. The most obvious characteristic of the people of faith is described as follows: Those who humble themselves in their prayers... who are active in deeds of charity. (23:24) The people destined for hell on the Day of judgement will confess: We were not of those who prayed; nor were we of those who fed the indigent. (74:43:44).

Unless man becomes a devotee of God and well-wisher of people, faith will be a herculean burden which he cannot carry over distances.

### **Relationship between affection and devotion to God**

A little reflection will convince you that there is no dichotomy between the two. Bowing in devotion and love in God's way are two aspects of one truth. It is one urge which takes two different forms when it is translated into action. Where there is devotion to God, there ought to be love for God's bondmen. Otherwise it will be presumed that devotion is defective.

The polytheists prayed but the Qur'an reprimanded them and told them that they indulged in self - made

form of prayer and were indifferent to the spirit of prayer. In proof thereof the Qur'an said that their heart did not have milk of human kindness for the have-not and the indigent. They were so miserly that they were not prepared to lend commonplace tools. (See Surah 107)

It makes known that the Qur'an presents help to the indigent as an essential concomitant of prayer. According to the Qur'an, there cannot be one without the other as they proceed from the same source. The heart imbued with love for God should be made restive by any tragedy striking the people at large. This is why the Qur'an mentions together devotion to God and affection towards people and accords to both equal importance. According to the Qur'an, both are indispensable. On occasions the Qur'an presents affection and sympathy as an alternative for the glorification of God as though goodwill towards people is a proof of genuine devotion towards God.

Fasting is a pure form of worship through which man starves and puts on leash his emotions for the sake of God. Still the Qur'an equates goodwill and help for the people in distress with this form of worship.

If a man says that his wife is his mother and he wants to withdraw the statement, then he is called upon to set free a slave or fast sixty consecutive days or feed sixty poor people by way of compensation. (Qur'an 58:2,3). The compensation for violating an oath is either to clothe and feed ten indigent people or to set a slave free or to fast for three days. (Qur'an 4:89)

If a Muslim proposes to take advantage of both Umrah and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makka), it is ordained

that an animal should be sacrificed, and if such an animal is not available, fasting for ten days is ordained. (Qur'an, 2:196)

All these commandments give equal importance to fasting on the one hand and to emancipation of slaves, life support to the poor and animal sacrifice on the other hand.

To make amends for any defect that might remain in the performance of different forms of worship, goodwill towards people is stressed. A pilgrim is prohibited from shaving his head but if he is forced to shave his head on account of some ailment, then he is ordered to fast or sacrifice an animal or pay alms. (Qur'an, 2:196)

On completion of fasting in the month of Ramadan, Charity, by name Fitr, is made obligatory on the ground that it would neutralise the vain and undesirable acts inadvertently performed while fasting. (Abu Dawood) Going a step farther, the old and the ailing are called upon to feed the poor in lieu of their inability to fast.

### **Awareness of God's bounty**

These arguments indicate the deep and close relationship between prayer and affection. The spirit of prayer enables man to intellectually grasp God's favours and bounties and to spontaneously prostrate before the Lord, overwhelmed by all-pervading gratitude to Him. The same spirit is astir in affection. A man realises that he has been given eyes to see, a tongue to speak, a mind to reflect and apprehend, infrastructure to lead a luxurious life and compares his condition with that of

the have-nots, who do not have food and clothes for their survival. Then he thanks God and sets aside a part of his wealth for the sake of the have-nots under the impression that if he renders help to the poor in this world, God would rush help to him on the Day of Judgement. A raiment today to a poor person can cover the donor's nudity tomorrow. Food to a hungry man today can ensure the donor emancipation from starvation tomorrow.

If this attitude is not there even after enjoying God's bounties, then it means that the beneficiary's heart is unaware of God's bounties. The defect of an atheistic mind is that it takes advantage of its existence and of the universe but gives no credit to God for it. It views this vast universe abounding in advantageous things as a mere accident. It is a mere chance that in his existence are assembled a collection of several abilities and skills through which he derives benefit from the world. The theory of chance eliminates from man mercy and affection. If man is of the opinion that he owes nothing to anyone from his personal possessions then he recognises no one's share in them.

The polytheistically conditioned mind envisages the concept of God but the concept remains extremely vague and confused and does not grant to man a genuine understanding to appreciate God's bounty.

The glorious Qur'an fosters in man a belief that, whatever asset he has in this world, it is but a gift of God and so it automatically follows that other creatures ought to have a claim on it.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَهُ عَيْنَيْنِ<sup>٦</sup> وَلِسَانًا<sup>٧</sup> وَ شَفَّيْنِ<sup>٨</sup> وَ هَدَىٰ يَهُ  
 النَّجَادَيْنِ<sup>٩</sup> فَلَا أَقْحَمَ الْعَقَبَةَ<sup>١٠</sup> وَ مَا أَذْلَكَ مَا الْعَقَبَةَ<sup>١١</sup>  
 فَلَكَ رَاقِبَةٌ<sup>١٢</sup> أَوْ ارْطَاعُونَ فِي يَوْمٍ ذُئْنِي مَسْعَيْتُ<sup>١٣</sup> يَبْهِنَا دَامَقْرَبَتُ<sup>١٤</sup>  
 أَوْ مُشْكِنَتُ<sup>١٥</sup> دَامَتْرَبَتُ<sup>١٦</sup>  
 (البلد: ٨-١٢)

"Have we not made for him a pair of eyes?  
 And a tongue,  
 And a pair of lips?  
 And shown him the two highways?  
 But he hath made no haste on the path that is steep  
 And what will explain  
 To thee the path that is steep?  
 (It is) freeing the bondman;  
 or the giving of food in a day of privation  
 To the orphan with claims of relationship,  
 Or to the indigent (down) in the dust.

(Qur'an 90: 8-16)

To look upon assets as favours from God creates a sense of gratitude and transforms the beneficiary into a sincere well-wisher of the people. While donating to others, it never occurs to the donor that he is being magnanimous. Instead he becomes keenly aware of God's blessings upon him. His line of thinking will be as follows: "The blessings in my possession have come to me not as a result of my endeavours. They might not have come to me in the first instance and I could be deprived of them any moment." Such an attitude obliges him not to guard his favours like a snake guarding a treasure but to consider them as gifts from God to be shared with others.

Islam attaches great value to this attitude. Without this attitude, a thousand acts of munificence are as

futile as the act of scattering seeds on dust-laden rocks in the hope that farming would be possible.

In addition to fostering this attitude, Islam has pointedly explained the principle of justice, and the initial steps of injustice, the fundamentals of interpersonal transactions, and the nullifying factors of these transactions. On the basis of this criterion it will become easy for both individual and society to assess the transactions and to rectify any error in them.

There is a sea of difference between the relationships based on faith in God and in His guidance on the one hand, and the relationships based on other factors on the other hand. The former relationships cannot be terminated unless God's commandment breaks them whereas the latter relationships are under a constant threat of being smashed to smithereens. A believer in God has no choice but to maintain the relationship approved by God, irrespective of personal predilections, and whether justice or injustice has been done to him. The person, not believing in God, is free to break any relationship not profitable to him and to deceive the closest relative if it fetches any advantage to him. Because he does not labour under any sense of accountability, every kind of deception is expected of him. A believer in God cannot practise fraud and inconstancy even on an enemy because God forbids it.

### **The initiation of Affection**

When a man, imbued with affection and sympathy, steps into the world of action, the people with whom he comes into contact first day in, day out are wife,

children, parents, siblings, neighbours, and relatives. Islam declares that these people deserve good treatment and help. Ignoring them, one cannot spend on others. Charity should begin at home.

Once a man asked the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him), "I have a dinar. How should I spend it?" He replied, "Spend it on your self." The man said, "I have a second dinar." The Prophet said, "Spend it on your children." The man said, "I have a third dinar." The Prophet said, "Spend it on your wife." The man said, "I have a fourth dinar." The Prophet said, "This should go to your slave." The man said, "I have one more dinar." The Prophet replied, "You can now understand how you have to spend it." (Abu Dawood, Nisai).

Man has to begin showing good manners and goodwill to these persons who are close to him. This is but natural because rendering help to them will not be burdensome to him and may even be a response to his inner urge. Islam has given this natural urge a legal position so that man remains bound by it under every circumstance. The people who surround a man and share his sorrow deserve most the thing owned by him. It is not proper for a man to spend his wealth on people on the basis of humanity, ignoring the rights of his starving father, because a father is related to him on the basis of both humanity and blood ties. So his claim upon his son's good treatment has a twofold basis. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) stated, "Charity to a needy person is just charity but charity to a relative is both charity and blood-relationship due." (Ahmed, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibne Maja) That is to say, good treatment given to a relative will fetch a twofold

reward. The greatest benefit is that no individual will feel helpless, cornered, and unprotected because helping and cooperative circle of people will always be around. The father (will be) a protector of the son; the son an assistant of the father; one brother showing solidarity with another; one relative defending another. This prospect releases within a person tremendous energy and strength.

### The Scope of Affection

Drawing a circle of affection around each individual does not imply that, outside this circle, affection has no significance or Islam invalidates it. It only implies that the have-nots close to a rich person should not go without a share in his wealth. It is merely a question of priorities. Actually Islam declares that it is a matter of shame for any human society if some members suffer in a state of hunger and nudity and some others live in the lap of luxury. Islam builds a society on the basis of humanity. It instructs that no distinction should be made between a friend and a foe, an ally and a non-ally, stranger and a non-stranger, a native and a non-native in the matter of good conduct. According to Islam, human being is an invaluable asset as a human being. It does not like this asset to be wasted in any way. Therefore, it considers it to be the duty of every person to do every thing possible to save another person. Otherwise he will be guilty of allowing a bounty of God to go to waste.\*

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\* For further details, please read my book, "**Islam and Service to Mankind**", Translated by Usman Mohammad Iqbal, published in 2008, by Markazi Maktaba Islami Publishers, Okhla, New Delhi - 110 025.

Gross injustice has always been in league with power and government. Whenever a man secured power, he thought of himself as a man with absolute power and he put the weaklings to sword as if they were sheep and goats. The victims of this brutality comprised three classes-women, slaves, the common masses. Slavishness and subordination characterised these classes and the concept of human rights did not apply to them at all. The woman's story is a story of persecution. Every kind of atrocity was practised on her. Islam conceives of man and woman as inseparable from each other, and so made it clear that any atrocity perpetrated on woman was an atrocity on man himself. The wicked man does not do gross injustice to a woman; he does it so to himself.

The remnants of the system of slavery can still be seen in certain industrialised countries and give an indication of how the system would have functioned in the past. Islam bound the master and the slave in a bond of fraternal affection and ordered the master to give the same kind of food and clothes to the slave which he himself used. The ruler and the masses had the same kind of relationship which obtained between the master and the slave. One section of humanity had enslaved another section. Islam terminated this kind of relationship between the ruler and the masses and declared that 'service' is a synonym for governance, and that the ruler is a servant and not a feudal lord.

## 4. God's Legislation

### God is the Legislator

The force that rules over individuals in society is law, which determines their freedom and limits the area of their activity. In Islam law is God's alone. The right to order the execution of a work or to stop it is God's own prerogative. As all men are equal and as no one has precedence or supremacy over the other, no individual can resort to autocracy. If he does so, he is rather throwing down a gauntlet to God. If one individual bows to another individual's order, he is rather announcing his own humiliation and extinction. To be more explicit, the commandment of God is law. Therefore, Islam declares as null and void all those methods of legislation which men have adopted on their own. Islam is absolutely not prepared to accord to anyone that stature from where he could ask people to supplant obedience to God with slavery to himself.

### The all-encompassing nature of Islamic Law

The foremost implication of acknowledging God as the Legislator is that God's law should not be confined to collective life alone. Its supremacy should pervade personal life too. Though link with God is manifest in the market and the court, its first manifestation is at the personal level through man's emotions and sentiments.

Then only his quest for God extends to political and social affairs. If the affective component of his life has no rapport with God, then life's hectic activities will crowd Him out. This is the reason why the area of Islamic law is extensive, encompassing both the heart's impulses and the external acts. On the one hand, it prescribes a format for a spontaneous demonstration of devotion to God and a code for conduct for making a sacrifice while following God's path. On the other hand, it expounds methodology for performing acts in subservience to and glorification of God. No aspect of human life is outside its purview. It pervades both the hidden and visible aspects of man and directs them properly.

### **The defects of man - made laws**

The greatest defect of manmade laws is that they address an act only when it takes place. The emotions which trigger the action lie outside their purview because the exact evaluation of the inaccessible emotions, encased within man, is well-nigh impossible, in spite of the fact that they enjoy fundamental importance in human life, and they play a decisive role in any affair. Under their influence, man decides whether to take a step forward or retrace it. One person sees a purse falling from another person a little ahead of him and so he runs to retrieve it and to restore it to the rightful owner. One person picks the pocket of another person finding him offguard. This is due to two different urges as reflected in two different acts. Now, the weakness of law is that it is ever ready to bring the thief to book but it does not lay restriction on that

unholy urge which induces him to covet another person's property. If Mr. X inflicts some kind of material loss on Mr. Y, law is ever vigilant to take him to task but it does not grapple with the furnace of hatred and hostility, of enmity and ill-will that is burning in human bosom. It goes without saying that as long as the fire of hostility keeps burning, no man can renounce the urge to do harm.\*

Only a part of man is revealed through his deeds. It is a tip of the iceberg. A preponderant part of his being remains concealed within. A stirring within sets the limbs into motion, and this is known as 'Action'. All actions are subservient to happiness and sorrow and to love and hatred. The genuine identity of man is determined by his inner being, which is invisible. Action is but an imperfect and incomplete manifestation of this inner being. His activity is confined to a few hours either in the day or in the night. Even if he becomes an embodiment of action and is active every second, even then his inner being will not be totally manifest.

Law does not deal with human life in its entirety. Instead it confines itself to the world of praxis. The fact of the matter is that in order to bring about a genuine change in man what is urgently needed is a law that transforms genuinely the whole human life. It is Islam that provides us with such a law whose roots strike deep into human feelings and emotions and whose branches permeate the whole society. It first captivates the inner

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\* Retired Judge, C.S. Dharmadhikari, says: law could punish those involved in a fight but could not force them to live together as good neighbours. As reported in The Hindu, dated Jan. 1, 2003, p.4.

world of man and later invites him in the external world to live in conformity to law. The religiosity that takes hold of man on acknowledging God as one's own Master and Lord keeps him enslaved to God in the humdrum of commercial centres. The singular excellence of Islamic law is that it casts human personality first in its mould fully and then ordains man to lead his social life in total conformity to it. When the human mind and the human heart submit to God, then laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, civil and penal codes, justice and peace are promulgated. The assumption behind this is that if the inner world is ordered according to divine law, the world outside cannot remain exempt, and that if the heart and the mind rebel against law, then this rebellion will be reflected at every step in the external forum of action. It is very difficult for a hypocrite to conceal his hypocrisy. Unless man bows before God from the core of his being, Islam does not treat him as a law-abiding person, even if he is in fact subservient to Islamic law. According to Islam, that person is a Muslim into the depths of whose heart Islam has sunk and who makes his appearance in the world of action in a condition characterised by the subjugation of his emotional world to divine law and who should be recognised in the world more as a believer and an obedient devotee of God than as a man of decency and of principles. He should have placed himself under God's judgement before he announces it in the court. He should have bowed to God's order in solitude before submitting to it in open markets. This explains why Islam accords greater value to the glorification of God than to political and social laws. Devotion to God creates in man a deliberate

awareness that one should be subservient to God in all walks of life and thus absolves him from the impurity of contradiction between faith and practice. His private life and public life are rendered so homogeneous that a look at one life gives a comprehensive view of another. No other law has devised deliberately such a training programme for its subscribers.

### **Islam distinguishes between the law-abiding and the law-breakers**

Islam insists on the rule of law in the spheres of individual life and collective life. Any breach of law in any sphere will lead to punitive measures. Theft is punishable by the cutting off of the hand. Lashes are reserved for fornicators. Similarly, wilful avoidance of the mandatory prayers attracts the punitive measure of incarceration. Disobedience to God's commandments, either in the personal life or in the collective life, is synonymous with treason. In Islamic law, an apostate shall be put to sword. The anarchist will be executed too. One who professes Islam professes that his faith and practice will come under Islamic law and if he does not obey this law either in faith or in practice he contravenes what he professes.

However, Islam does not seek to impose its doctrines and beliefs upon those people who are not convinced that Islam is a religion of truth. It demands that such people should obey only that part of Islamic law which relates to the administration of the country. Being subject to the laws of the land, they are entitled to launch any kind of agitation. The question of slapping

sanctions upon their activities arises only when they harm those beliefs upon which the society is established. In all other respects no individual has any authority to challenge their rights. They cannot be called upon to renounce their beliefs. Their personal laws cannot be tampered with. Their trade, agriculture, industry, and technology will be unhampered. Their freedom of speech and writing is guaranteed. In short, they cannot be deprived of basic human rights which are their birthright. However, Islam does not lay upon them the responsibility of living up to her doctrines and of the administration of the land, for the simple reason that only those people can administer a system of government in whose efficacy and prosperity they have an emotional stake. Those people who do not accommodate this system in their hearts cannot be expected to establish it in the world.

### **Objection to the totalitarian aspect of Law**

The totalitarian aspect of law is not generally appreciated and it is presumed that its scope is confined to collective life. That law is considered to be excellent the extent of whose interference in private lives is in direct proportion to the need for ensuring peace and justice. But this point of view occasionally lands man in a condition where precept contradicts practice, where his character is not represented by his beliefs, where his outward life is not in harmony with his inner life. Consequently, the ailment of dual personality and hypocrisy surfaces. He has one perspective but the law of his group obliges him to accept a different perspective. He is emotionally not inclined towards a

particular law but he is called upon to conform to it. On the one hand law considers certain things to be profitable and even necessary. On the other hand, the individual considers those very things to be both irrelevant and positively harmful. Likewise in various problems the individual's views do not coalesce with law's disposition. The individual is obliged to carry out certain duties for which he feels no inner compulsion or he feels certain promptings within for whose practical gratification he finds no outlet.

In defence it is contended that in spite of ideological difference, respect for law is inherent in every human bosom and conscience feels consternation at the flouting of law and feels guilty before the bar of society because no social cohesion can last after law is liquidated. It is law that functions as a link to integrate assorted elements of a group. The imperative need for law has been felt since the advent of collective living and this feeling has struck strong and deep roots in the mind and heart of man with the passage of time.

But this defensive analysis contains reality less and exaggeration more. The respect for law is not so formidable in man as to restrain him from its violation. Law is a collective necessity but an individual's essential interest is in personal gain. The basis for his thought and action is the consideration of personal gain and loss. It is difficult for him to abstain from an action that guarantees personal advantage at the expense of collective loss. The advantage that accrues to society through respect for laws becomes very small while reaching each individual. Similarly, the effect of the disadvantage too in the process of spreading to the

society generally reaches an individual indirectly and in a small measure. That's why he attaches more importance to those things whose advantages and disadvantages affect him directly. If a single brick of his house is dislocated, he will be grief-stricken and he will ponder over the ways of improving the situation. But if a government building goes up in flames, he may not grieve much over it. His home is the apotheosis of his personal interests. It protects him from the changes in weather and provides security to his wife and children. He does not expect such direct benefit from a government building.

The result of this overriding self-interest is that man has always resorted to law-breaking in spite of his awareness regarding the necessity and significance of law. A smuggler, while transporting his country's assets to another country, does not pause to think how his action impoverishes his own country. Instead, he is tempted to think that he will be able to celebrate his daughter's wedding with great fanfare and to complete the construction of the fourth storey of his house. Likewise a clerk receives a bribe in the hope he will be able to get a grand suit of clothes, without realising that he is strangulating justice in the bargain.

One argument that is advanced in favour of law being effective and strong is that public opinion is behind it on the ground that law safeguards rights in society. If law is finished, then life, property, and honour will be jeopardised. Therefore no society as a collective group can ever tolerate breach of law. No one approves of adulteration as a marketing practice because he then cannot expect to buy an unadulterated

product. If a person approves of burglary in his enemy's house, then it is as if he were approving of burglary in his own house. Any encouragement given to a slight injustice is like allowing injustice and oppression to prowl in all directions. Therefore it is in man's own interest that society should be law-abiding and that no man who intends to defy law should be allowed to do so. No man will find it easy to reject this social perspective.

It is true that public opinion can not reject law. This is true as far as theory goes. As soon as it is put into practice, the question arises which law is backed by public opinion and which is not. Until today no tool has been invented to ascertain the opinion of the entire nation. The tools now available give us at the most a measure of the majority's inclination. In this majority too, the will of a small group is decisive. It is difficult to expect allegiance to a law in whose making the will of a nation in its entirety is not reflected.

It is contended in this context that all are obliged to uphold law whether it was made in accordance with the will of the people or not. After all, for the survival of justice and security, law is needed. But then this is only a supposition. For one thing, the breach of law need not be harmful to one and all. In fact, it may bring enormous gain to some people. That is the reason why a convict, on the one hand, faces taunts and condemnation from some people and, on the other hand, secures patronage and justification from others. In his breach of law, he gets support from those in whose company and proximity he usually leads his life. He sets much store by their approval or disapproval. The support of these

few people carries much more weight in his eyes than the criticism of tens of thousands of people. More often than not he tramples upon law under the instigation of these few people. It is probable that a government official may abstain from illegal gratification if the people closest to him allow him to remain content with his hard-earned income and do not insist upon supplementing it with income through dubious means.

### **Is man-made law self-fulfilling?**

The matter does not rest here if it is conceded that the motives for law-breaking are inherent in society. Instead, the basic issue with regard to law itself comes to the forefront. What is the guarantee that every law will invariably serve the purpose for which people agree to abide by it? The long history of legislation is there before us all. Were not many laws made which gulped human rights like a black cobra and under whose poison the whole society shrieked and groaned? Is it not the charisma of law that prostitution was legalised under the pretext that it is a social necessity and people are now obliged to bear the evil consequences of this measure? Exploitation was allowed in the name of national interest. Even today the door to every oppression and injustice is thrown open in the name of law. There are many atrocities which have been authenticated not by one individual or one nation but by the whole world.

As long as man enjoys the right of legislation, law will remain subordinated to human whims. It will be

like wax in the hands of one person or one group. If its scope is extended, it will serve the interests of one nation. No man can make a law which can provide for the welfare and prosperity of all people. Personal, patriotic, and national interests are such imponderables that it is difficult for man to think beyond them. Law will operate as a ruling passion only when man surrenders his feelings to it. He should not obey law under external pressure or under the impression that it is a social need. Instead he should make it a religious doctrine to give law a higher status than the one given to feelings and to personal, national, patriotic and racial interests, so much so that even in total privacy disregard of law should not be deemed passable.

### **Causes for the efficacy of Islamic Law**

Islamic law is the proclamation of the sovereignty of that Supreme Being who is free from all those prejudices which are the very bane of a human bosom. As regards Him, it cannot be imagined that He would ever be partial towards somebody in adjudication. He is transcendental and treats all alike. The very concept that law has originated from God creates in man a reverential feeling towards it and he follows it as a fiat which cannot be impugned. The first requirement for the efficacy of any law is that it should be welcomed as something irrefutable.

Islam cultivates human emotions in such a manner as to render itself dearer than life, and to make opposition to its legal system a most despicable thing in all circumstances. The follower of Islam abides by

its law as earnestly during the silence of the night as he does during the daylight. He keeps solitude and society on a par in the observance of law. From this point of view, among all books of law the Qur'an is the rarest "Book of Law" which not only provides legal guidelines for human existence but also renders human feelings favourable towards them. The Qur'an gave details not so much of laws as of the ways and means of rectifying psychic inadequacies. The Qur'an gave only a few rules and regulations for any problem of life. In fact, all its rules can be counted on fingers. The Qur'an strengthened in man the inclination to obey law to such an extent that man began voluntarily to search for the soul and purpose of law. Today Muslims can be proud of possessing an enormous legal heritage and this is the result of their curiosity to know what the objectives of law are and how life could be subordinated to law. The search for the meaning of laws made with such pure motives, sincerity, and hard work that, if the legal details had been fully provided, they would not have been radically different from what obtains so far as their purpose goes. This is the result of awareness that law is a superior force and that one should submit to law. If this awareness does not spring from the heart, then man can break every chain (of restraint and prohibition.)

However, it does not mean that man is impervious to the harshness of law or the pressure of society. Surely there is much force in both but by themselves they cannot make man law-abiding. At the most they are helpful in preventing man from pursuing evil. It is law's virtue that it utilises helpful forces. The convict must

be given an exemplary punishment in order to deter others. If law is not harsh enough, then it will become difficult to establish justice and security. On the one hand Islam persuades man to be law-abiding and on the other hand it makes its punitive measures a source of deterrence for potential law-breakers.

Nevertheless Islam does not justify the severity of punishment in all matters. According to Islam, such severity is to be invoked as the last alternative when there remains no other way of the reform of the criminal and as a result adverse effects are felt in society.

Islam allows the severity of punishment in three circumstances (1) Apostasy. To bear witness to the veracity of the foundations on which the society is established and then to declare them null and void is treachery against the society. (2) Rebellion against the state. (3) Murder and adultery. In any of these circumstances Islam wants punishment to be severe. Sparing an adulterer or a traitor is social crime per se.

Similarly, Islam takes advantage of social pressure. On this score it is necessary in Islam to execute punishment promptly and publicly. The convict must be at once physically punished and morally humiliated. Social awareness, regarding the need to discourage crime universally and regarding the fact that crime is not a matter for patronage, must be alive and kicking. The survival of the society does not devolve upon one individual or two but upon all individuals. If a tragedy befalls Islam and no attempt is made to protect it, then the whole society has to bear the blame. Every Muslim

is a defender of Islam and it is his responsibility to prevent onslaughts on it.

## Certain Qur'anic Laws

For the elucidation of the observations made above, certain Qur'anic laws are presented. Each human life has to be revered. The right to life should not be harmed or usurped. The principle involved here is that any offence to human body and life is punishable in proportion to the degree of enormity.

وَكُلُّنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَ  
الْأَنفُ بِالْأَنفِ وَالْأَذْنَ بِالْأَذْنِ وَالشَّفَتَ بِالشَّفَتِ وَالْجُرْفَةَ قَصَاصٌ  
فَمَنْ تَصْدِقَ لِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْلِمْ بِهَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ  
فَإِنَّكُمْ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

"We ordained therein for them: "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth and wounds equal for equal." But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself. And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed they are no better than wrong-doers." (Qur'an 5:45)

Next in importance to life is property. Islam guarantees its protection too. And so it ordains that no mercy be shown to the thief and his hand be cut off.

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ قَاتِلُوْا أَيْدِيهِمَا جَزَاءً إِنَّمَا كَسَبَنَا نَكَالًا  
وَنَنْهَا طَوْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

"As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands: a punishment by way of example from Allah, for their crime : and Allah is exalted in power, full of wisdom." (Qur'an 5:38)

Among the high moral values which Islam promotes in society, sanctity of the body enjoys basic significance. That's why, adultery and other sexual offences are considered abominable.

أَلْرَانِيَّةُ وَالرَّازِقِ فَاجْلِدُوَا كُلَّ ذَاجِبٍ قِنْهُمَا مَا تَهْوِي جَلْدُكُمْ وَلَا  
تَأْخُذُ كُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةً فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُنَّ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ وَلَا يَسْهُدُ عَنِ الْبَهْمَ طَرِيقٌ فِي الْمُوْمُنِينَ ① (النور: ٢)

"The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by Allah, if ye believe in Allah and the Last Day: and let a party of the believers witness their punishment."

(Al - Qur'an, 24:2)

Islam wants the honour and prestige of each individual to be protected and there should be no attack on it from any quarter.

وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَثْرَيْعَةٍ شَهَدَ آءَاهُ  
فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَنِينَ جَلْدًا وَلَا تَقْبِلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْفَسِقُونَ ② (النور: ٣)

"And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegation) flog them with eighty stripes: and reject their evidence ever after; for such men are wicked transgressors. (Qur'an 24:4)

Rebellion against the government, and anarchy on the earth are horrible crimes. Punishment for them is equally severe.

إِنَّمَا جَزْءُ الظُّرُفِ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقْتَلُوا أَوْ يُصْلَبُوا أَوْ تُقْطَعَ أَيْرِيزِهِمْ وَآثِرُ جُلُومُهُمْ مِنْ  
خَلَافٍ أَوْ يُنْقَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ جُزُءٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي  
الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ إِلَّا الظُّرُفُ تَائِبُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَشْدُرُوا  
عَلَيْهِمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ (مائدہ: ۳۳)

*"The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land; that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter."*

(Qur'an, 5:33)

In these verses law is not presented as a social sanction but as the commandment of that Being from whom man can never be emancipated. On the one hand severest punishments are announced for the violation of law and on the other hand loyalty to law is fostered through belief in the Hereafter. At the same time these laws are addressed to those people who have faith in their truth. This is one way of keeping alive the awareness that these laws should be implemented in the whole society. Every individual should think that it is his responsibility to prevent law - breaking and to preserve law.

## 5. Islam - A System that is Everlasting

### The Past and the Future of Islam

"Fourteen hundred years ago the system of Islam was expounded. Its re-establishment in the present day is next to impossible." This sort of observation one may hear off and on and it is reflective of a particular frame of mind. On the one hand it is an acknowledgement that the past of Islam was an eventful phenomenon and, on the other hand, it demonstrates the observer's despair with regard to the future of Islam. However, the possibility of the recurrence of an event which took place in the past is greater than that of the occurrence of an event which has remained so far in the world of imagination. The past provides us with a sense of certainty, and conjecture alone is possible as regards the future. The past is the proof of an event whereas the future hints at the possibility of an event. We are at liberty to reject a certain possibility but we can not deny what has happened. From this point of view, chances of re-emergence of the Islamic system are far brighter because it is an event of the past with such absolute and outstanding proportions that no other event in the history can stand comparison. If a seeker of knowledge turns the pages of history, the event that will absorb his attention first will be the establishment of the Islamic system. This event of the past is a prediction of its own reappearance in the future.

## Events are not subject to history

Those people who deny that Islam has a future do so on the ground that every event comes into being owing to certain historical reasons and conditions and without them the event would have been a non-event. Such conditions are not a result of one's will or liking. They move on at their own natural pace. Man has absolutely no control over them. It is not within his powers to specify for himself a direction different from that of the historical conditions. In other words, no ideology survives on its inherent strength in this world and that external factors determine its advent. Man is just dependent on and a tool of those factors which manipulate him according to their liking.

But this approach is unrealistic. Events are not subject to the pace of history. Instead man's ambition and will power bring events into existence. It goes without saying that on certain occasions, the pace of history accelerates the impending event. However, it so happens and happens so often, that an ideology animated with vitality emerges in the most trying circumstances and goes on to prevail by dint of its inherent strength and competence. Observing the moves of the ideology, history charts its own direction and the era is obliged for the sake of such an ideology to renounce its own familiar and well-established values.

To assert that oppression, injustice, anarchy and sedition are the outcomes of the prevailing circumstances and that it is the circumstances alone which familiarize man with concepts like truth and justice is to falsify what is patently obvious. The scourge of Communism replaced Czardom in Russia.

Did the conditions there warrant this change? Or did one kind of oppression loosen its grip in order that another kind of oppression should hold court there? If dictatorship transplants democracy, is it a failure of democracy or will it be more appropriate to say that lust for power sounded the death-knell of democracy? If events had been under the control of circumstances then, perhaps, man would have been deprived of truth because the history of truth points to the fact that truth has always emerged as an antidote to oppression and injustice and has always emerged victorious in spite of the circumstances prevailing at that time.

A phenomenal instance of history is the dissemination of the message of Islam and its triumph over the immediate neighbourhood of the place of its origin fourteen centuries ago. This message began at a time when it was in severest conflict with the concepts of that epoch. At every step, they were engaged in an armed conflict. At last the concepts of that epoch conceded defeat and the whole scenario of existence at that time got completely integrated with the message. The victory of the Islamic system is unique from the point of view that regional conditions of the time did not affect it in any manner whatsoever. When this system was established in its active form there was no need to amend any of its parts. Socialism is in vogue today but whenever a country adopts it, it does so by modifying it to suit the local conditions. When the Islamic system was established, it was done so exactly in the form in which it was presented by Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him). The hiatus between precept and practice obtaining in every other

system is conspicuously absent in the Islamic system.

Circumstances do not lord it over man. Instead, they represent his way of thinking. They make it clear what type of social life and civilization he likes and what perspective he has on ethics and law. If a powerful ideology brings about a change in man's way of thinking, then undoubtedly conditions will change. Here there is no conflict or clash essentially between ideology and ambience but between one ideology and another. Circumstances are at the beck and call of a powerful and triumphant ideology. If ideology turns in one direction, the current of circumstances flows in the same direction.

Modern era is the era of pure materialism. A net of materialism is so spread in all the four directions that man finds it difficult to step out of it. Civilization, culture, social life, education, industry, trade-everything has come under the impact of materialism. Man thinks in terms of materialistic concepts and measures everything against the scale of materialistic values. However, it is our firm faith that if the concept of God-worship and of longing for the Hereafter is presented in a proper manner to counter materialism, then the whole scenario could be revolutionized and all moulds cast by materialism might disintegrate. If circumstances formed no hurdles on the path of materialism, then there is no reason to think that they will inhibit the longing for the Hereafter. Just as the materialistic mind obliges man today to pursue happiness by fair means or foul, in the same manner eagerness to secure salvation in the Hereafter will oblige him to sacrifice the present comfort for the sake

of the advantage par excellence to come.

The manifestation of truth or falsehood, fact or fiction, justice or oppression is possible in any circumstance and at any time. The difference in circumstances may alter their forms but their core will remain intact. Theft is common in both India and America. The difference is that a thief in India may resort to burglary and a thief in America may opt for car theft in the conditions obtaining there. A businessman who justifies cheating in his profession today might not have kept his dealings above board had he been born a century earlier. But it has to be conceded that the present-day methods of his fraud will be more sophisticated than those he would have adopted a century ago. Resistance to the enemy was offered in the past as it is done today but there is a qualitative difference: the stone and the spear of the past are replaced by a bomb now.

### **Man's nature is constant**

Since the advent of man on the earth, there broke out many a revolution in the fields of culture and civilization, politics, and geography. His feelings and emotions, however, remained unaffected. He was not devoid of his moral impulse when he was leading his life in a simplistic and uncivilized manner. Nor is that impulse choked now under the weight of sophistication and artifice. Just as he indulges in persecution and atrocity in order to meet a broad spectrum of his needs in the modern era, he resorted to the same indulgence in the past in spite of the fact that his needs then were

severely restricted. If he was acquainted with compassion, love, even-handedness and justice in the past, he is not unfamiliar with them now. Therefore to question how an experiment successfully performed in a comparatively less civilized period can again be repeated with a similar result in a period noted for its many-splendoured culture is to betray a hopelessly inadequate grasp of the whole issue. Such a question can arise when the civilized man of today had been radically different from the uncivilized man of the past in the matter of emotions and feelings. It is certain that the first man who appeared on the face of the earth and the present-day individual have no difference, viewed from this angle. If an ideology demonstrated its ability in the past to rule over man's passions, then the changed circumstances cannot prevent the ideology from exercising such an authority again over man's passions in future. The latest ideology can disappear into oblivion if such an ability is not inherent in it.

### Ephemeral Ideologies

Ephemeral Ideologies can be classified in two ways. Either they had their origin in unexpected crises or they had a bearing upon certain classes and groups. An association established to provide educational facilities to the youth loses its raison d'etre when such facilities are made available. If a committee is formed to espouse moral elevation of the masses, then it functions as long as the opportunities for sermonizing and propagation of moral values are there and it is able to reform and train people. Similarly a programme meant for a particular nation or caste comes to an end when the target group

is no more. Later it becomes an artifact and is a candidate for resurrection. An ideology which emerges on the basis of either nation or race or state aims at addressing the peculiar conditions and problems confronting that nation or state. It evinces no interest in matters pertaining to other nations. Looking for way of prosperity for another group in a programme dedicated to the promotion of one group is similar to driving several cars abreast in a narrow lane which permits only one car to pass at a time.

For such ideologies to emerge there will be enough substance in every new political and social change. This is the reason why they so frequently appear before man and why he feels so fascinated by them for a little while, and why he takes rapid strides towards them. Sometimes there are in them enough resources to gratify his nationalistic urges. Sometimes they reinvigorate his patriotic inclinations. Sometimes they satisfy ethically approved feelings springing eternally in man. But these ephemeral ideologies are largely harmful in two ways. The first harm is that human perspective is severely restricted. A very big weakness in man is that, circumscribed by his peculiar problem and conditions, he forms a concept in his mind and concludes that truth is encompassed within it when the fact of the matter is that truth is more extensive than his concept. For example, every nation of this world whether Communist or Capitalist, is avowedly hostile to economic exploitation and is committed to its eradication but each nation has its own definition of exploitation and has persuaded itself that its own definition of exploitation is the standard one.

Communism looks upon personal ownership as exploitation and does not classify state ownership as exploitation. The stance of Capitalism, however, is exactly the reverse. The truth is that exploitation is inherent in each of the two forms. Both man and state are guilty of exploitation, but the narrowness of the ideology has rendered the truth narrow.

Occasionally, man wishes to accept a fact but his narrow outlook allows him to perceive one or two aspects only and he jumps to the conclusion that those aspects alone constitute the entire fact. Consequently the neglected aspects of truth remain elusive to him.

The second harm from the ephemeral ideologies is the difficulty man finds in apprehending that there can be an ideology, not resulting from circumstances or a phase in time and yet surviving in spite of upheavals. In other words, man has come to believe that every basis of truth is for a fixed period only and it ceases to be of value when that period comes to an end. It is beyond him to comprehend that there can be perennial values for social reconstruction and that on their basis mutual trust can be generated among individuals. As it is, each individual is gripped with fear in his heart of hearts, wondering how long the basis of his transaction with another individual or with state will endure.

### **Islam-an eternal truth**

Islam provides us with values of existence which are eternal and invariable. These values remained prominent in the lives of individuals in every era and are prominent even today and became prominent once

in collective life during a particular phase of history. Some people study Islam as a collective system of a particular period in history and they find it hard to realize the significance of Islam after that period. The truth of the matter is that though Islam is a historical fact, it is much more an eternal fact. Its roots have gone deeper into the human psyche. If the human psyche is eternal, then there can be no destruction for Islam. No doubt, Islam ruled over the collective life of a particular environment in a particular period. However it is not a product of that environment and that period to become conterminous with them. It did not espouse a particular problem of a temporary nature. It did not champion the interest of a particular community. Islam is a perennial spring season. If any society embraces it the splendour of the spring season will be reflected in it, but the myopic observation gives credit to the society for that splendour.

## **Two basic questions**

Islam does not address questions like, what conditions will man face during which period of history and in which environment? What will be the man's problems in those conditions and what strategies will be adopted for their solution? What type of economic problem will man face during the agricultural era and how will this problem change during the industrial era? At what stage will human civilization find itself during the twentieth century and what changes are envisaged after this century? Islam addresses man as a man irrespective of the pre-historic or post-historic nature of man. According to Islam, problems arising in

culture, civilization, economics and politics are not the essential problems of man. The essential problems are germane to two basic questions and how these questions are answered will determine the variety of ways in which the solution to the problems can be obtained. Therefore, man has to find an answer to these questions living within the parameters of every revolution in culture and civilization. One of these questions is about the obedience to and worship of God and the other pertains to man's own destiny.

### **The first question**

The first question implies that man should voluntarily surrender himself to God and renounce his freedom. The issue of obedience to God or non-obedience to Him is an issue which finds its echo both in the world within man and in the world without. We cannot derive benefit from this world until we decide for ourselves whether we should lead our lives in subordination and loyalty to the Creator of the universe or assert our own autonomy and freedom. This issue was valid in the past and it is valid today and will be valid tomorrow. The issue is not merely ideological. It is much more a practical issue. Man moves on, ignoring many a problem. But, without addressing this issue, he cannot move one step forward. He has before him desires of the self, demands of the community and the nation, rituals and customs. Each one of these things compels allegiance. He will have to select for worship either these idols or the one True God. No one can describe this issue as obsolete and dead except the person who is audacious enough to deny each and every

thing of the universe and even himself.

### The second question

The second question that Islam poses before mankind is the question of the Hereafter. Islam presents the Hereafter as an event that is sure to take place in the future. Life in the Hereafter begins where the present life ends. Any man hailing from any stage of the development of culture and civilization can not claim exemption from the Life Hereafter because it is an event against which he simply has no defence. He has to combat a thing without any tool for defence. He is moving towards a destination and will find himself without the wherewithal after covering a little distance. This feeling does not render a man of any era and any status impervious to the disconcerting thought of the Hereafter. If the citizens of a city are convinced that a bomb is going to be dropped on them, then each of them, whether he is a labourer or a proprietor, a peasant or an industrialist, a trader or a researcher will make a frantic bid to flee from it. This is exactly the matter with the Hereafter. Each has to grapple with it. A person who considers the Hereafter to be a mere figment of imagination can afford to be nonchalant towards it. Otherwise a strong belief in the Hereafter will not allow a believer to sleep like a log.

The issue pertaining to God and the Hereafter encompasses the whole gamut of life. Each solution to this issue demands that life in its entirety should be restructured in accordance with it. It is related, on the one hand, to human conscience and feelings, and on the

other hand, to social problems. No aspect of life can remain outside its purview. If there are no God and Hereafter, then man will be under the obligation to meet his personal and collective needs in some other way and this way will rule absolutely over man's thought and action.

The first effect of a firm faith in God and the hereafter will be felt on human personality, because this faith is a response to the questions which spontaneously emerge from within. When man becomes aware of the fact that the cosmos has a Being, who is in possession of absolute power, and who is its Creator and Owner, and before Whom he has to present himself one day and render an account of his deeds, then he gets scared of the possibility of the Owner seizing him for punishment and he begins to seek His bounties. He becomes an embodiment of haplessness and supplication and a monument of fear and anxiety. He stretches his hand before Him in the hope of receiving affection and generosity. He bows his head before Him openly acknowledging his own powerlessness and humbleness.

### **The principles of worship**

The feeling of humility in the presence of God is a permanent and genuine feeling in man. Whether he is in difficulty or at rest, whether he belongs to civilized times or to the dark ages, whenever he thinks of God, his heart will be replete with this feeling. Emotions and feelings dwell within man and no revolution can sweep within man when his nature has been unfamiliar with it.

That's why in Islam, the rules and regulations pertaining to worship are absolute. No one has the right to modify them in any manner and in reality there is no need for such a modification. Ibadah, or worship, is the most appropriate way of acknowledging the godhead and glory of God and one's own helplessness and humbleness. The determination of the right way is necessary because it safeguards man from all those ways which are erroneous and mismatched with the main purpose. If the right way is not determined, their possibility exists for us to be fully deprived of the truth instead of realizing it.

### **Innovative Approach to Transactions**

So far as human transactions are concerned, Islam has not discussed every minuscule part of theirs. Instead, Islam has expounded such principles which constitute the bases for politics and morality. The world around man has always witnessed revolutions. A few hundred years ago it would have been difficult for man to have envisaged the present phase of his cultural evolution. The technologies of monetary transaction in vogue today may be changed tomorrow. The social conventions of the past have become strange in the present day. No list of laws can be prepared which can encompass human transactions of every era. Any revolution in culture and civilization cannot render the principles of politics and morality which Islam has expounded irrelevant to man. These principles guide man in every era and under every circumstance. These principles are signposts on the way of politics and morality leading man to God. If these signposts are

removed, then man cannot ascertain what God's will is in matters pertaining to worldly affairs. Where there was fear of man going astray or deviating from the path of righteousness in the fields of culture, politics, civilization, and society, God has introduced preventive measures through these principles.

These signposts signify that God's government has been established on the earth. So Islam has ordained that these signposts should not be removed and that they should always remain prominent and at vantage point. These principles may be numerically few and the affairs of life too extensive to be circumscribed. But these principles enable us to know God's will. They are minarets of light indicating the way to destination. As long as there is no deviation from or rebellion against these principles, every endeavour based on them will be construed as an attempt to reach out to God. In the technical vocabulary of shariah, it is described as "Ijtihaad". This in essence means that an attempt is made to ascertain God's will in the light of the instructions given by God. The door of Ijtihaad will remain open till the Doomsday.

## 6. Why This Rebellion?

When it is asserted, that Islam is the solution for all problems of existence, that through Islam all human worries and hardships can be removed, that men can secure peace, relief, prosperity, and satisfaction, and that there is just no other way through which our problems can be solved, then at once the question arises, "In that case the whole world should have turned to Islam. But the truth is that the world rebels against it. What is the reason? Why does the world hate and run from it?"

### The First cause

The first cause is that man is fond of this world and of its advantages. Man hardly accepts an ideology which runs counter to his interests. In a clash between personal interests and the cause of truth, his sympathies are with personal interests. If he is advised to bear a certain loss for the sake of truth, then he will not be prepared to do so. Instead he may go to the extent of practising deception and dishonesty on his brother in expectation of some gain. For a petty advantage, he will have no qualms of conscience to burgle his neighbour's house and on certain occasions even to betray the nation and the country.

Islam opposes this unabashed promotion of

self-interest. According to Islam, the solution to all complications and problems lies in the human endeavour to terminate the clash for rights and privileges. Don't snatch the rights of others: instead renounce your own right for the benefit of others. Prefer their comfort and convenience to your own. Don't let go the ideal of justice in the face of persecution and injustice. Confront the pride and arrogance of others with your own humility and humbleness. Let your heart respond with goodwill to others' ill-will, and with affection to others' contempt. If a person is killed, his brother is entitled to settle a score with the murderer but can gain in stature and greatness through forgiveness. All this one is expected to do not for any material purpose or worldly gain but for God's pleasure and for His bounties in the Hereafter.

This demand of Islam is such that one can fulfil it only when one considers the Hereafter and its advantages and disadvantages as more definite than the world and its advantages and disadvantages. However, it is extremely difficult for a belief in a thing covered in the future's wrap and hidden from the human eye to grow into a sense of strong conviction persuading a man to sacrifice those advantages, observable day and night, for the sake of that hidden thing.

## The Second Cause

Every era contains definitely within it some merits. These merits ensure the advent of that era and make the era distinctive. However, the glitter of these merits

makes many people blind to the obvious defects of the era. There was a time when man sang paeans of praise for the military conquests of the monarchs, for their administrative skill, for their munificence and generosity, and for their rewards and honours. But when the age of monarchy was replaced by that of democracy the merits of democracy came to be extolled. Previously the evils of the monarchical system were not noticed just as the defects of democracy are not being felt now.

Modern age is characterised by scientific progress. There is no gainsaying the fact that man has stood to gain enormously by this progress. At the same time much harm has been caused by the perverted ideas and attitudes of the present times. The scientific progress has impressed and affected man so much that he is no longer willing to give a thought to the shortcomings and evils of the present era. For example, if you fall foul of sexual promiscuity, you will be branded an antediluvian fool, out of step with the latest trend in looking upon promiscuity as a source of progress. The thoughts and views of the present era had rejected religion and its doctrines and beliefs. And so the uselessness and lowliness of religion have become almost definite.

Take India, for example. Not a single community living in India is against religion. In fact the communities are founded on religious doctrines. It is no exaggeration to say that religion is integral to the ethos of India. But the thinkers of India prefer to solve their problems by selecting one of the current ideologies or by resorting to an eclectic approach through the adoption and modification of the current

ideologies. No man of contemplation, not even a champion of religion, dares to search for a solution to the problems in the light of religion or at least to analyse the arguments on whose basis religion is dubbed as impracticable and unscientific.

The dominating ideology of the present era, whether it be Socialism, or Democracy or Dictatorship, is absolutely un-Islamic both in its temperament and its philosophy. At the very outset, it rejects the concepts of God, Doomsday, punishment, and reward. It cannot be expected of such an era to bare its bosom of its own accord to the light of Islam.

### **The Third cause**

The people unfamiliar with Islam alone are not impressed by such ideologies. Even those who profess to be Muslims have come under their spell. There are some among the Muslims who have accepted un-Islamic ideologies with full conviction and, echoing such ideologies, they have promptly branded Islam as untenable and inane. They regret that through their names, families, and communities, their association with Islamic conventions is made public. The group, so highly contemptuous of Islam, is rather proclaiming that Islam is not worthy enough to be consulted and that solution to the problems of mankind lies not within the ambit of Islam but outside it.

Another group comprises those individuals who have firm faith in un-Islamic ideologies and still carry within them the national affiliations, consequent upon their having been born in a community owing allegiance

to Islam. This group likes to obey the un-Islamic ideologies but does not opt, at the same time, for alienation from the community. For this purpose, they retain Islam in those aspects of life towards which the un-Islamic ideologies are not hostile but, in the other aspects of life, where the current ideologies come into clash with Islam, they adopt the ideologies without demur. In fact, this group prefers to retain in life both Islam and Kufr, monotheism and polytheism, belief in the Hereafter and disbelief in the Hereafter. This self-contradicting stance of the group projects Islam in such ludicrous lights that no one likes to cast even a cursory glance at Islam.

A third group consists of traditional Muslims who have not assessed Islam in a scholarly way and who do not have the competence for it. Instead, they cling to a few vague beliefs and communal conventions. They are not aware how their beliefs are subjected to polemical attacks, and how in different ways are challenged those things which they have taken as self-evident and irrefutable truths. One reason why they have steadfastly clung to their beliefs is that they are unaware of the criticisms made against the beliefs. Otherwise many members of this group would have given up their position. It is futile to expect that this group would establish the superiority of Islam to the current erroneous thoughts. It is enough if they stick to the truth.

The fourth group knows that the current ideologies are dominant and so cannot conceive of any progress and supremacy without them. This group studies history and concludes that the rise and fall of nations can be

understood on the basis of the beliefs and ideologies current in their time. This group always represented and interpreted Islam on the basis of the current trends, as (they presume) the truth of Islam cannot be established otherwise. If the popularity of democracy increased, then the members of this group claimed that Islam too upheld democracy. And when there was a trend towards basic or guided democracy, then they started claiming that the sovereignty in Islam vested with the Caliph or the Imam.

This group could not prove that Islam was superior to and distinct from other ideologies in spite of their genuine fondness for Islam. This is the reason why the best efforts of this group could not divert the world's attention towards Islam. The world thought that Islam did not have a different viewpoint on life from its own and that Islam supported and concurred with it.

This group did not allow Islam to be introduced as a distinct viewpoint of life on the one hand and on the other hand this group started proving several un-Islamic concepts to be a part of Islam in their enthusiasm to harmonize Islam with the latest trends. The result was that the image of Islam got distorted. Whenever an ideology is mixed up with a dissimilar ideology, its pristine beauty is lost and it begins to look absurd. For example, the concept of collective ownership is in tune with the attitude of life that Communism expounds but it will be a height of folly to prove that Islam upholds that concept too. The entire Islamic system rests on the individual's right of ownership and the individual's freedom. Similarly, the concept of birth control is in accordance with those ideologies which take into

account the limited resources while dealing with the problem of food. The people who believe that resources for provision are in God's hands can support birth-control at the risk of contradicting their belief.

At the end, that group remains which looks upon Islam as a definitive authority and which subscribes to the belief that all problems of life can be solved only through Islam. However, as the dominant ideologies and philosophies have banished Islam from the areas of culture and politics, civilization and society, arts and crafts, so this group has ceased to inquire what Islam's instructions are with regard to these aspects of life, what principles of politics Islam formulates, how Islam maps culture and society, and what directions Islam gives to various arts and crafts. In this way to all intents and purposes Islam has ceased to be of practical value in matters of daily routine for members of this group. Islam is confined to an area wherein interaction between two individuals is not touched upon. What interest will the present-day individual evince in Islam if it offers no solution to the problems perplexing him? How can he look upon Islam as a panacea for the ills besetting him?

This attitude led the group to sustain a very serious privation; it lost the capacity for ijtihaad. Without it, it is difficult to know Islam's guidelines pertaining to current situations and challenges. The ability to present Islam as the one and only religion of truth for each and every epoch and to prove the supremacy of Islamic ideology over perverse ideologies was lost by this group.

## The Fourth Cause

In addition to the ideological deficiencies of various kinds, the behavioural pattern of a large number of Muslims has always been a hindrance to the process of understanding and elucidating Islam. Only a few Muslims have been an exception in this matter. For a long period they have been clinging to something other than Islam in such a way that from no aspect of their lives has Islam been genuinely represented. When they became traders they practised deception, fraud, falsehood, and bribery in ways similar to those adopted by the rejecters of God. When they became students, they displayed enthusiasm for the promotion and propagation of the anti-Islamic disciplines. When they became affluent, they squandered their wealth without an eye on the accountability in the Hereafter. When they assumed reins of power, they drew inspiration from despotic and tyrannical monarchs. How then can the world be persuaded to believe that they possess doctrines guaranteeing salvation for mankind, principles guaranteeing justice, teachings guaranteeing triumph and prosperity for the people, and that they possess a panacea for their ills and a remedy for their perplexities?

On seeing this behavioural pattern of the Muslims, the world could have concluded that the Muslims no longer have faith in the lofty ideals of Islam and that they have renounced them. But the world did not draw such a conclusion. Instead, the world felt obliged to think that Islam perforce is a religion which awakens bloodthirstiness and bestiality in man, makes him greedy and lustful, and teaches him to indulge in fraud

and falsehood. This conclusion is to be expected because, in spite of their misdeeds, Muslims projected themselves as a community subscribing to the tenets of Islam and seeking their own salvation only in their fidelity to Islam.

Owing to the intellectual stagnation of the Muslims, Islam came to be looked upon as a corpus of beliefs of a certain section and this corpus was supposed to be unconcerned with life and its problems. Owing to the perverted behaviour of the Muslims, Islam came to be looked upon as a religion preaching bestiality, hatred and animosity. For various reasons, these two impressions about Islam were given wide publicity. This process of disinformation was so relentlessly carried on that the people have internalised it. Unless these impressions are eradicated, the genuine concept of Islam cannot be planted in the minds.

### **The Fifth Cause**

In creating these two impressions about Islam, along with the intellectual and behavioural shortcomings of the Muslims, the teachings of other religions and their conduct are responsible too.

Islam is a truth which has always been presented by different names in every epoch and area. So there is no area and there is no human population where Islam has not reached in some form or other. However, in many populated areas, it was not renewed over long periods. As a result, Islam could not retain its pristine purity. Not only that. In some places man-made philosophies and views distorted Islam to such an extent that it could

not be recognised. It is accepted on all hands that only those interpreters of a system of philosophy are considered genuine who believe in that system, because they alone can ensure that interpretation should be sincere and the core teaching should not be compromised. This did not happen in the case of Islam, the religion expounded by God, which reached different sections of people. The injustice done to Islam is this: Every man made bold to give an individualistic interpretation of Islam, irrespective of his being friendly or hostile towards it. Consequently, extraneous elements were made integral to the core teachings of Islam. The fact of the matter is that the proportion of the divine teachings in Islam has become so nominal that it will be a gross misrepresentation if it is claimed to be a religion revealed by God.

After corrupting and distorting a system, we cannot expect it to yield the desired results. This is what actually happened. When the teachings of Islam in their deficient, nay deviant form, were implemented in a practical situation, the first impression one gathered was that it was unequal to the task of solving life's problems.

The need of the hour was the invocation of the basic teachings and purging of all the dross that had accumulated in the faith owing to changing times and varying conditions. But it is regrettable that each sect stuck to its erroneous and misshaped concepts and worked itself up to oppose anything that seemed to be out of step with these concepts, as though every truth should conform to these self-imposed concepts in order to gain the recognition of the sect. A thousand

eyes may observe the truth and it may be confirmed in a diversity of ways but the sect refused to recognise it.

As different religions acted in the name of God, the world became prejudiced against any teaching attributed to God and concluded that religion constituted some far-fetched and ambiguous concepts, having no bearing upon reality. It was considered futile to refer to religion for guidance in the matter of life's issues. This attitude was a rejection of only the trash and half-baked theories which assumed the guise of divine teachings. Otherwise, so far as the final and God-revealed religion is concerned, it is still extant and intact, without addition or subtraction of a word. There is no gainsaying the fact that the followers of Islam have made many mistakes and have remained distant from the path towards which Islam has been beckoning people. Notwithstanding all this, they preserved faith in the form in which they had received it. Today this faith is before us and is proclaiming that it is true. Till date no research or experience has declared this proclamation to be null and void.